THE VAILIMA EDITION
OF THE WORKS OF
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

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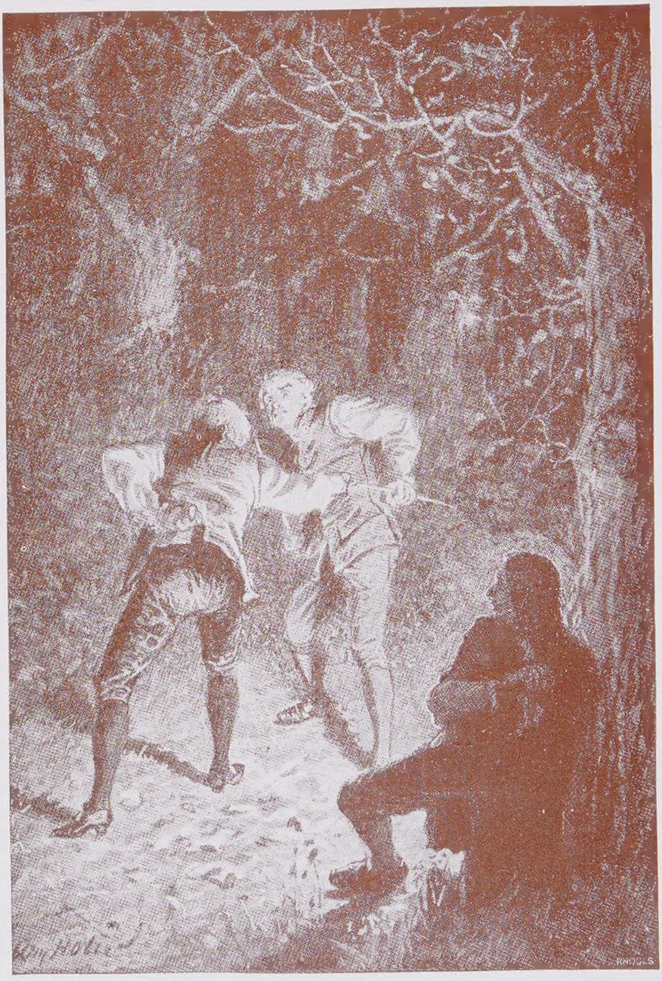

He now recognized himself for lost, and had some taste of the cold agony of fear.

—*The Master of Ballantrae*, p. 100

THE WORKS OF
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

THE MASTER OF BALLANTRAE

PRINCE OTTO

AND OTHER STORIES

VOLUME THREE

P. F. COLLIER & SON COMPANY
PUBLISHERS - - - NEW YORK

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THE MASTER OF BALLANTRAE

DEDICATION

To

Sir Percy Florence and Lady Shelley

Here is a tale which extends over many years and travels into many countries. By a peculiar fitness of circumstance the writer began, continued it, and concluded it among distant and diverse scenes. Above all, he was much upon the sea. The character and fortune of the fraternal enemies, the hall and shrubbery of Durrisdeer, the problem of Mackellar's homespun and how to shape it for superior flights; these were his company on deck in many star-reflecting harbors, ran often in his mind at sea to the tune of slatting canvas, and were dismissed (something of the suddenest) on the approach of squalls. It is my hope that these surroundings of its manufacture may to some degree find favor for my story with seafarers and sea-lovers like yourselves.

And at least here is a dedication from a great way off; written by the loud shores of a subtropical island near upon ten thousand miles from Boscombe Chine and Manor; scenes which rise before me as I write, along with the faces and voices of my friends.

Well, I am for the sea once more; no doubt Sir Percy also. Let us make the signal B. R. D.!

R. L. S.

WAIKIKI, MAY 17, 1889

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THE MASTER OF BALLANTRAE

SUMMARY OF EVENTS DURING THE MASTER'S WANDERINGS

THE full truth of this odd matter is what the world has long been looking for and public curiosity is sure to welcome. It so befell that I was intimately mingled with the last years and history of the house, and there does not live one man so able as myself to make these matters plain, or so desirous to narrate them faithfully. I knew the Master; on many secret steps of his career I have an authentic memoir in my hand; I sailed with him on his last voyage almost alone; I made one upon that winter's journey of which so many tales have gone abroad, and I was there at the man's death. As for my late Lord Durrisdeer, I served him and loved him near twenty years, and thought more of him the more I knew of him. Altogether, I think it not fit that so much evidence should perish; the truth is a debt I owe my lord's memory, and I think my old years will flow more smoothly and my white hair lie quieter on the pillow when the debt is paid.

The Duries of Durrisdeer and Ballantrae were a strong family in the southwest from the days of David First. A rime still current in the countryside:

Kittle folk are the Durrisdeers,
They ride wi' ower mony spears—

bears the mark of its antiquity, and the name appears in another, which common report attributes to Thomas of Ercildoune himself—I can not say how truly, and which some have applied—I dare not say with how much justice—to the events of this narration:

Twa Duries in Durrisdeer,
  Ane to tie and ane to ride,
An ill day for the groom
  And a waur day for the bride.

Authentic history besides is filled with their exploits, which (to our modern eyes) seem not very commendable, and the family suffered its full share of those ups and downs to which the great houses of Scotland have been ever liable. But all these I pass over to come to that memorable year 1745 when the foundations of this tragedy were laid.

At that time there dwelt a family of four persons in the house of Durrisdeer, near St. Bride's, on the Solway shore, a chief hold of their race since the Reformation. My old lord, eighth of the name, was not old in years, but he suffered prematurely from the disabilities of age; his place was at the chimney-side; there he sat reading, in a lined gown, with few words for any man and wry words for none, the model of an old retired housekeeper, and yet his mind very well nourished with study, and reputed in the country to be more cunning than he seemed. The Master of Ballantrae, James in baptism, took from his father the love of serious reading; some of his tact perhaps as well, but that which was only policy in the father became black dissimulation in the son. The face of his behavior was merely popular and wild: he sat late at wine, later at the cards; had the name in the country of "an unco man for the lasses," and was ever in the front of broils. But for all he was the first to go in, yet it was observed he was invariably the best to come off, and his partners in mischief were usually alone to pay the piper. This luck or dexterity got him several ill-wishers, but with the rest of the country enhanced his reputation, so that great things were looked for in his future when he should have gained more gravity. One very black mark he had to his name, but the matter was hushed up at the time and so defaced by legends before I came into those parts that I scruple to set it down. If it was true it was a horrid fact in one so young, and if false it was a horrid calumny. I think it notable that he had always vaunted himself quite implacable and was taken at his word, so that he had the addition among his neighbors of "an ill man to cross." Here was altogether a young nobleman (not yet twenty-four in the year '45) who had made a figure in the country beyond his time of life. The less marvel if there were little heard of the second son, Mr. Henry (my late Lord Durrisdeer), who was neither very bad nor yet very able, but an honest, solid sort of lad like many of his neighbors. Little heard, I say; but indeed it was a case of little spoken. He was known among the salmon fishers in the firth, for that was a sport that he assiduously followed; he was an excellent good horse-doctor besides, and took a chief hand almost from a boy in the management of the estates. How hard a part that was in the situation of that family none knows better than myself, nor yet with how little color of justice a man may there acquire the reputation of a tyrant and a miser. The fourth person in the house was Miss Alison Graeme, a near kinswoman, an orphan and the heir to a considerable fortune which her father had acquired in trade. This money was loudly called for by my lord's necessities; indeed the land was deeply mortgaged, and Miss Alison was designed accordingly to be the Master's wife, gladly enough on her side; with how much good-will on his is another matter. She was a comely girl, and in those days very spirited and self-willed, for the old lord having no daughter of his own, and my lady being long dead, she had grown up as best she might.

To these four came the news of Prince Charlie's landing, and set them presently by the ears. My lord, like the chimney-keeper that he was, was all for temporizing. Miss Alison held the other side, because it appeared romantical; and the Master (though I have heard they did not agree often) was for this once of her opinion. The adventure tempted him, as I conceive; he was tempted by the opportunity to raise the fortunes of the house, and not less by the hope of paying off his private liabilities, which were heavy beyond all opinion. As for Mr. Henry, it appears he said little enough at first; his part came later on. It took the three a whole day's disputation, before they agreed to steer a middle course, one son going forth to strike a blow for King James, my lord and the other staying at home to keep in favor with King George. Doubtless this was my lord's decision; and as is well known, it was the part played by many considerable families. But the one dispute settled, another opened. For my lord, Miss Alison and Mr. Henry all held the one view: that it was the cadet's part to go out; and the Master, what with restlessness and vanity, would at no rate consent to stay at home. My lord pleaded, Miss Alison wept, Mr. Henry was very plain spoken; all was of no avail.

"It is the direct heir of Durrisdeer that should ride by his king's bridle," says the Master.

"If we were playing a manly part," says Mr. Henry, "there might be sense in such talk. But what are we doing? Cheating at cards!"

"We are saving the house of Durrisdeer, Henry," his father said.

"And see, James," said Mr. Henry, "If I go, and the prince has the upper hand, it will be easy to make your peace with King James. But if you go, and the expedition fails, we divide the right and the title. And what shall I be then?"

"You will be Lord Durrisdeer," said the Master. "I put all I have upon the table."

"I play at no such game," cries Mr. Henry. "I shall be left in such a situation as no man of sense and honor could endure. I shall be neither fish nor flesh!" he cried. And a little after, he had another expression, plainer perhaps than he intended. "It is your duty to be here with my father," said he. "You know well enough you are the favorite."

"Ay?" said the Master. "And there spoke Envy! Would you trip up my heels—Jacob?" said he, and dwelt upon the name maliciously.

Mr. Henry went and walked at the low end of the hall without reply; for he had an excellent gift of silence. Presently he came back.

"I am the cadet and I *should* go," said he. "And my lord here is the master, and he says I *shall* go. What say ye to that, my brother?"

"I say this, Harry," returned the Master, "that when very obstinate folk are met, there are only two ways out: Blows—and I think none of us could care to go so far; or the arbitrament of chance—and here is a guinea piece. Will you stand by the toss of the coin?"

"I will stand and fall by it," said Mr. Henry. "Heads, I go; shield, I stay."

The coin was spun and it fell shield. "So there is a lesson for Jacob," says the Master.

"We shall live to repent of this," says Mr. Henry, and flung out of the hall.

As for Miss Alison, she caught up that piece of gold which had just sent her lover to the wars, and flung it clean through the family shield in the great painted window.

"If you loved me as well as I love you, you would have stayed," cried she.

" 'I could not love you, dear, so well, loved I not honor more,' " sung the Master.

"Oh!" she cried, "you have no heart—I hope you may be killed!" and she ran from the room, and in tears to her own chamber.

It seems the Master turned to my lord with his most comical manner, and says he, "This looks like a devil of a wife."

"I think you are a devil of a son to me," cried his father, "you that has always been the favorite, to my shame be it spoken. Never a good hour have I gotten of you since you were born; no, never one good hour," and repeated it again the third time. Whether it was the Master's levity, or his insubordination, or Mr. Henry's word about the favorite son, that had so much disturbed my lord, I do not know; but I incline to think it was the last, for I have it by all accounts that Mr. Henry was more made up to from that hour.

Altogether it was in pretty ill blood with his family that the Master rode to the north; which was the more sorrowful for others to remember when it seemed too late. By fear and favor, he had scraped together near upon a dozen men, principally tenants' sons; they were all pretty full when they set forth, and rode up the hill by the old abbey, roaring and singing, the white cockade in every hat. It was a desperate venture for so small a company to cross the most of Scotland unsupported; and (what made folk think so the more) even as that poor dozen was clattering up the hill, a great ship of the king's navy, that could have brought them under with a single boat, lay with her broad ensign streaming in the bay. The next afternoon, having given the Master a fair start, it was Mr. Henry's turn; and he rode off, all by himself, to offer his sword and carry letters from his father to King George's government. Miss Alison was shut in her room and did little but weep, till both were gone; only she stitched the cockade upon the Master's hat and (as John Paul told me) it was wetted with tears when he carried it down to him.

In all that followed, Mr. Henry and my old lord were true to their bargain. That ever they accomplished anything is more than I could learn; and that they were any way strong on the king's side, more than I believe. But they kept the letter of loyalty, and corresponded with my lord president, sat still at home, and had little or no commerce with the Master while that business lasted. Nor was he, on his side, more communicative. Miss Alison, indeed, was always sending him expresses, but I do not know if she had many answers. Macconochie rode for her once, and found the Highlanders before Carlisle, and the Master riding by the prince's side in high favor; he took the letter (so Macconochie tells), opened it, glanced it through with a mouth like a man whistling, and stuck it in his belt, whence, on his horse passageing, it fell unregarded to the ground. It was Macconochie who picked it up; and he still kept it, and indeed I have seen it in his hands. News came to Durrisdeer of course, by the common report, as it goes traveling through a country, a thing always wonderful to me. By that means the family learned more of the Master's favor with the prince, and the ground it was said to stand on; for by a strange condescension in a man so proud—only that he was a man still more ambitious—he was said to have crept into notability by truckling to the Irish. Sir Thomas Sullivan, Colonel Burke, and the rest were his daily comrades, by which course he withdrew himself from his own country folk. All the small intrigues he had a hand in fomenting;

thwarted my Lord George upon a thousand points; was always for the advice that seemed palatable to the prince, no matter if it was good or bad; and seems upon the whole (like the gambler he was all through life) to have had less regard to the chances of the campaign than to the greatness of favor he might aspire to, if (by any luck) it should succeed. For the rest, he did very well in the field; no one questioned that; for he was no coward.

The next was the news of Culloden, which was brought to Durrisdeer by one of the tenants' sons, the only survivor, he declared, of all those that had gone singing up the hill. By an unfortunate chance, John Paul and Macconochie had that very morning found the guinea piece (which was the root of all the evil) sticking in a holly bush; they had been "up the gait," as the servants say at Durrisdeer, to the change-house; and if they had little left of the guinea, they had less of their wits. What must John Paul do but burst into the hall where the family sat at dinner, and cry the news to them that "Tam Macmorland was but new lichtit at the door, and—wirra, wirra—there were nane to come behind him?"

They took the word in silence like folk condemned; only Mr. Henry carrying his palm to his face, and Miss Alison laying her head outright upon her hands. As for my lord, he was like ashes.

"I have still one son," says he. "And, Henry, I will do you this justice, it is the kinder that is left."

It was a strange thing to say in such a moment; but my lord had never forgotten Mr. Henry's speech, and he had years of injustice on his conscience. Still it was a strange thing; and more than Miss Alison could let pass. She broke out and blamed my lord for his unnatural words, and Mr. Henry because he was sitting there in safety when his brother lay dead, and herself because she had given her sweetheart ill words at his departure; calling him the flower of the flock, wringing her hands, protesting her love, and crying on him by his name; so that the servants stood astonished.

Mr. Henry got to his feet and stood holding his chair; it was he that was like ashes now.

"Oh," he burst out suddenly, "I know you loved him!"

"The world knows that, glory be to God!" cries she; and then to Mr. Henry: "There is none but me to know one thing—that you were a traitor to him in your heart."

"God knows," groans he, "it was lost love on both sides."

Time went by in the house after that without much change; only they were now three instead of four, which was a perpetual reminder of their loss. Miss Alison's money, you are to bear in mind, was highly needful for the estates; and the one brother being dead, my old lord soon set his heart upon her marrying the other. Day in, day out, he would work upon her, sitting by the chimney-side with his finger in his Latin book, and his eyes set upon her face with a kind of pleasant intentness that became the old gentleman very well. If she wept, he would condole with her, like an ancient man that has seen worse times and begins to think lightly even of sorrow; if she raged, he would fall to reading again in his Latin book, but always with some civil excuse; if she offered (as she often did) to let them have her money in a gift, he would show her how little it consisted with his honor, and remind her, even if he should consent, that Mr. Henry would certainly refuse. *Non vi sed sæpe cadendo* was a favorite word of his; and no doubt this quiet persecution wore away much of her resolve; no doubt, besides, he had a great influence on the girl, having stood in the place of both her parents; and for that matter, she was herself filled with the spirit of the Duries, and would have gone a great way for the glory of Durrisdeer; but not so far, I think, as to marry my poor patron, had it not been (strangely enough) for the circumstance of his extreme unpopularity.

This was the work of Tam Macmorland. There was not much harm in Tam; but he had that grievous weakness, a long tongue; and as the only man in that country who had been out (or rather who had come in again) he was sure of listeners. Those that have the underhand in any fighting, I have observed, are ever anxious to persuade themselves they were betrayed. By Tam's account of it, the rebels had been betrayed at every turn and by every officer they had; they had been betrayed at Derby, and betrayed at Falkirk; the night march was a step of treachery of my Lord George's; and Culloden was lost by the treachery of the Macdonalds. This habit of imputing treason grew upon the fool, till at last he must have in Mr. Henry also. Mr. Henry (by his account) had betrayed the lads of Durrisdeer; he had promised to follow with more men, and instead of that he had ridden to King George. "Ay, and the next day!" Tam would cry. "The puir, bonnie master and the puir, kind lads that rade wi' him, were hardly ower the scaur, or he was aff—the Judis! Ay, weel—he has his way o't: he's to be my lord, nae less, and there's mony a cauld corp amang the Hieland heather!" And at this, if Tam had been drinking, he would begin to weep.

Let any one speak long enough he will get believers. This view of Mr. Henry's behavior crept about the country by little and little; it was talked upon by folk that knew the contrary but were short of topics; and it was heard and believed and given out for gospel by the ignorant and the ill-willing. Mr. Henry began to be shunned; yet a while, and the commons began to murmur as he went by, and the women (who are always the most bold because they are the most safe) to cry out their reproaches to his face. The Master was cried up for a saint. It was remembered how he had never had any hand in pressing the tenants; as, indeed, no more he had, except to spend the money. He was a little wild perhaps, the folk said; but how much better was a natural, wild lad that would soon have settled down, than a skinflint and a sneckdraw, sitting, with his nose in an account book, to persecute poor tenants. One trollop, who had had a child to the Master and by all accounts been very badly used, yet made herself a kind of champion of his memory. She flung a stone one day at Mr. Henry.

"Whaur's the bonnie lad that trustit ye?" she cried.

Mr. Henry reined in his horse and looked upon her, the blood flowing from his lip. "Ay, Jess?" says he. "You too? And yet ye should ken me better." For it was he who had helped her with money.

The woman had another stone ready, which she made as if she would cast; and he, to ward himself, threw up the hand that held his riding rod.

"What, would you beat a lassie, ye ugly—?" cries she, and ran away screaming as though he had struck her.

Next day, word went about the country like wildfire that Mr. Henry had beaten Jessie Broun within an inch of her life. I give it as one instance of how this snowball grew and one calumny brought another; until my poor patron was so perished in reputation that he began to keep the house like my lord. All this while, you may be sure he uttered no complaints at home; the very ground of the scandal was too sore a matter to be handled; and Mr. Henry was very proud and strangely obstinate in silence. My old lord must have heard of it, by John Paul, if by no one else; and he must at least have remarked the altered habits of his son. Yet even he, it is probable, knew not how high the feeling ran; and as for Miss Alison, she was ever the last person to hear news, and the least interested when she heard them.

In the height of the ill-feeling (for it died away as it came, no man could say why) there was an election forward in the town of St. Bride's, which is the next to Durrisdeer, standing on the Water of Swift; some grievance was fermenting, I forget what, if ever I heard; and it was currently said there would be broken heads ere night, and that the sheriff had sent as far as Dumfries for soldiers. My lord moved that Mr. Henry should be present; assuring him it was necessary to appear, for the credit of the house. "It will soon be reported," said he, "that we do not take the lead in our own country."

"It is a strange lead that I can take," said Mr. Henry; and when they had pushed him further, "I tell you the plain truth," he said, "I dare not show my face."

"You are the first of the house that ever said so," cries Miss Alison.

"We will go all three," said my lord: and sure enough he got into his boots (the first time in four years—a sore business—John Paul had to get them on) and Miss Alison into her riding-coat, and all three rode together to St. Bride's.

The streets were full of the riffraff of all the countryside, who had no sooner clapped eyes on Mr. Henry than the hissing began, and the hooting, and the cries of "Judas!" and "Where was the Master?" and "Where were the poor lads that rode with him?" Even a stone was cast; but the more part cried shame at that, for my old lord's sake and Miss Alison's. It took not ten minutes to persuade my lord that Mr. Henry had been right. He said never a word, but turned his horse about, and home again, with his chin upon his bosom. Never a word said Miss Alison; no doubt she thought the more; no doubt her pride was stung, for she was a bonebred Durie; and no doubt her heart was touched to see her cousin so unjustly used. That night she was never in bed; I have often blamed my lady—when I call to mind that night, I readily forgive her all; and the first thing in the morning, she came to the old lord in his usual seat.

"If Henry still wants me," said she, "he can have me now." To himself she had a different speech: "I bring you no love, Henry; but God knows, all the pity in the world."

June the first, 1748, was the day of their marriage. It was December of the same year that first saw me alighting at the door of the great house; and from there I take up the history of events as they befell under my own observation, like a witness in a court.

I made the last of my journey in the cold end of December, in a mighty dry day of frost; and who should be my guide but Patey Macmorland, brother of Tam! For a tow-headed, bare-legged brat of ten, he had more ill tales upon his tongue than ever I heard the match of; having drunken betimes in his brother's cup. I was still not so old myself; pride had not yet the upper hand of curiosity; and indeed it would have taken any man, that cold morning, to hear all the old clashes of the country and be shown all the places by the way where strange things had fallen out. I had tales of Claverhouse as we came through the bogs, and tales of the devil as we came over the top of the scaur. As we came in by the abbey I heard somewhat of the old monks, and more of the free-traders, who use its ruins for a magazine, landing for that cause within a cannon-shot of Durrisdeer; and along all the road, the Duries and poor Mr. Henry were in the first rank of slander. My mind was thus highly prejudiced against the family I was about to serve: so that I was half surprised when I beheld Durrisdeer itself, lying in a pretty, sheltered bay, under the Abbey Hill; the house most commodiously built on the French fashion or perhaps Italianate, for I have no skill in these arts; and the place the most beautified with gardens, lawns, shrubberies, and trees I had ever seen. The money sunk here unproductively would have quite restored the family; but as it was, it cost a revenue to keep it up.

Mr. Henry came himself to the door to welcome me: a tall, dark young gentleman (the Duries are all black men) of a plain and not cheerful face, very strong in body but not so strong in health: taking me by the hand without any pride, and putting me at home with plain, kind speeches. He led me into the hall, booted as I was, to present me to my lord. It was still daylight; and the first thing I observed was a lozenge of clear glass in the midst of the shield in the painted window, which I remember thinking a blemish on a room otherwise so handsome, with its family portraits, and the pargetted ceiling with pendants, and the carved chimney, in one corner of which my old lord sat reading in his Livy. He was like Mr. Henry, with much the same plain countenance, only more subtle and pleasant, and his talk a thousand times more entertaining. He had many questions to ask me, I remember, of Edinburgh College, where I had just received my mastership of arts, and of the various professors, with whom and their proficiency he seemed well acquainted; and thus, talking of things that I knew, I soon got liberty of speech in my new home.

In the midst of this came Mrs. Henry into the room; she was very far gone, Miss Katharine being due in about six weeks, which made me think less of her beauty at the first sight, and she used me with more condescension than the rest, so that upon all accounts I kept her in the third place of my esteem.

It did not take long before all Pate Macmorland's tales were blotted out of my belief, and I was become, what I have ever since remained, a loving servant of the house of Durrisdeer. Mr. Henry had the chief part of my affection. It was with him I worked, and I found him an exacting master, keeping all his kindness for those hours in which we were unemployed, and in the steward's office not only loading me with work but viewing me with a shrewd supervision. At length one day he looked up from his paper with a kind of timidness, and says he: "Mr. Mackellar, I think I ought to tell you that you do very well." That was my first word of commendation, and from that day his jealousy of my performance was relaxed; soon it was "Mr. Mackellar" here and "Mr. Mackellar" there with the whole family, and for much of my service at Durrisdeer I have transacted everything at my own time and to my own fancy, and never a farthing challenged. Even while he was driving me I had begun to find my heart go out to Mr. Henry, no doubt partly in pity—he was a man so palpably unhappy. He would fall into a deep muse over our accounts, staring at the page or out of the window, and at those times the look of his face and the sigh that would break from him awoke in me strong feelings of curiosity and commiseration. One day, I remember, we were late upon some business in the steward's room. This room is in the top of the house, and has a view upon the bay and over a little wooded cape on the long sands; and there, right over against the sun which was then dipping, we saw the free-traders with a great force of men and horses scouring on the beach. Mr. Henry had been staring straight west, so that I marveled he was not blinded by the sun; suddenly he frowns, rubs his hand upon his brow and turns to me with a smile.

"You would not guess what I was thinking," says he. "I was thinking I would be a happier man if I could ride and run the danger of my life with these lawless companions."

I told him I had observed he did not enjoy good spirits, and that it was a common fancy to envy others and think we should be the better of some change, quoting Horace to the point like a young man fresh from college.

"Why, just so," said he. "And with that we may get back to our accounts."

It was not long before I began to get wind of the causes that so much depressed him. Indeed a blind man must have soon discovered there was a shadow on that house, the shadow of the Master of Ballantrae. Dead or alive (and he was then supposed to be dead) that man was his brother's rival—his rival abroad, where there was never a good word for Mr. Henry and nothing but regret and praise for the Master, and his rival at home, not only with his father and his wife, but with the very servants.

They were two old serving-men that were the leaders. John Paul, a little, bald, solemn, stomachy man, a great professor of piety and (take him for all in all) a pretty faithful servant, was the chief of the Master's faction. None durst go so far as John. He took a pleasure in disregarding Mr. Henry publicly, often with a slighting comparison. My lord and Mrs. Henry took him up, to be sure, but never so resolutely as they should, and he had only to pull his weeping face and begin his lamentations for the Master—"his laddie," as he called him—to have the whole condoned. As for Henry, he let these things pass in silence, sometimes with a sad and sometimes with a black look. There was no rivaling the dead, he knew that, and how to censure an old serving-man for a fault of loyalty was more than he could see. His was not the tongue to do it.

Macconochie was chief upon the other side—an old, ill-spoken, swearing, ranting, drunken dog—and I have often thought it an odd circumstance in human nature that these two serving-men should each have been the champion of his contrary, and blackened their own faults and made light of their own virtues when they beheld them in a master. Macconochie had soon smelled out my secret inclination, took me much into his confidence, and would rant against the Master by the hour, so that even my work suffered. "They're a' daft here," he would cry, "and be damned to them! The Master—the deil's in their thrapples that should call him sae!—it's Mr. Henry should be Master now! They were nane sae fond o' the Master when they had him, I can tell ye that. Sorrow on his name! Never a guid word did I hear on his lips, nor naebody else, but just fleering and flyting and profane cursing—deil ha'e him! There's nane kent his wickedness: him a gentleman! Did ever ye hear tell, Mr. Mackellar, o' Wully White the wabster? No? Aweel, Wully was an unco praying kind o' man—a driegh body, nane o' my kind; I never could abide the sight o' him; onyway he was a great hand by his way of it, and he up and rebukit the Master for some of his on-goings. It was a grand thing for the Master o' Ball'ntrae to tak up a feud wi' a' wabster, was-nae't?" Macconochie would sneer; indeed he never took the full name upon his lips but with a sort of a whine of hatred. "But he did! A fine employ it was—chapping at the man's door and crying 'boo' in his lum, and puttin' poother in his fire and pee-oys[1] in his window, till the man thocht it was auld Hornie was come seekin' him. Weel, to mak a lang story short, Wully gaed gyte. At the hinder end they couldnae get him frae his knees, but he just roared and prayed and grat straucht on till he got his release. It was fair murder, a'body said that. Ask John Paul; he was brawly ashamed o' that game—him that's sic a Christian man! Grand doin's for the Master o' Ball'ntrae!" I asked him what the Master had thought of himself. "How would I ken?" says he. "He never said naething." And on again in his usual manner of banning and swearing, with every now and again a "Master of Ballantrae" sneered through his nose. It was in one of these confidences that he showed me the Carlisle letter, the print of the horseshoe still stamped in the paper. Indeed that was our last confidence, for he then expressed himself so ill-naturedly of Mrs. Henry that I had to reprimand him sharply, and must thenceforth hold him at a distance.

My old lord was uniformly kind to Mr. Henry; he had even pretty ways of gratitude, and would sometimes clap him on the shoulder and say, as if to the world at large:

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[1] A kind of firework made with damp powder.

"This is a very good son to me." And grateful he was no doubt, being a man of sense and justice. But I think that was all, and I am sure Mr. Henry thought so. The love was all for the dead son. Not that this was often given breath to; indeed with me but once. My lord had asked me one day how I got on with Mr. Henry, and I had told him the truth.

"Ay," said he, looking sideways on the burning fire, "Henry is a good lad, a very good lad," said he. "You have heard, Mr. Mackellar, that I had another son? I am afraid he was not so virtuous a lad as Mr. Henry: but dear me, he's dead, Mr. Mackellar! and while he lived we were all very proud of him, all very proud. If he was not all he should have been in some ways, well, perhaps we loved him better!" This last he said looking musingly in the fire; and then to me, with a great deal of briskness, "But I am rejoiced you do so well with Mr. Henry. You will find him a good master." And with that he opened his book, which was the customary signal of dismission. But it would be little that he read and less that he understood; Culloden field and the Master, these would be the burden of his thought; and the burden of mine was an unnatural jealousy of the dead man for Mr. Henry's sake, that had even then begun to grow on me.

I am keeping Mrs. Henry for the last so that this expression of my sentiment may seem unwarrantably strong: the reader shall judge for himself when I have done. But I must first tell of another matter, which was the means of bringing me more intimate. I had not yet been six months at Durrisdeer when it chanced that John Paul fell sick and must keep his bed; drink was the root of his malady, in my poor thought; but he was tended and indeed carried himself like an afflicted saint; and the very minister who came to visit him professed himself edified when he went away. The third morning of his sickness, Mr. Henry comes to me with something of a hangdog look.

"Mackellar," says he, "I wish I could trouble you upon a little service. There is a pension we pay; it is John's part to carry it; and now that he is sick, I know not to whom I should look unless it was yourself. The matter is very delicate; I could not carry it with my own hand for a sufficient reason; I dare not send Macconochie, who is a talker, and I am—I have—I am desirous this should not come to Mrs. Henry's ears," says he, and flushed to his neck as he said it.

To say truth, when I found I was to carry money to one Jessie Broun, who was no better than she should be, I supposed it was some trip of his own that Mr. Henry was dissembling. I was the more impressed when the truth came out.

It was up a wynd off a side street in St. Bride's that Jessie had her lodging. The place was very ill inhabited, mostly by the free-trading sort; there was a man with a broken head at the entry; half-way up, in a tavern, fellows were roaring and singing, though it was not yet nine in the day. Altogether, I had never seen a worse neighborhood even in the great city of Edinburgh, and I was in two minds to go back. Jessie's room was of a piece with her surroundings and herself no better. She would not give me the receipt (which Mr. Henry had told me to demand, for he was very methodical) until she had sent out for spirits and I had pledged her in a glass; and all the time she carried on in a light-headed, reckless way, now aping the manners of a lady, now breaking into unseemly mirth, now making coquettish advances that oppressed me to the ground. Of the money, she spoke more tragically.

"It's blood money," said she, "I take it for that: blood money for the betrayed. See what I'm brought down to! Ah, if the bonnie lad were back again, it would be changed days. But he's deid—he's lyin' deid amang the Hieland hills—the bonnie lad, the bonnie lad!"

She had a rapt manner of crying on the bonnie lad, clasping her hands and casting up her eyes, that I think she must have learned of strolling players; and I thought her sorrow very much of an affectation, and that she dwelled upon the business because her shame was now all she had to be proud of. I will not say I did not pity her, but it was a loathing pity at the best; and her last change of manner wiped it out. This was when she had had enough of me for an audience and had set her name at last to the receipt. "There!" says she, and taking the most unwomanly oaths upon her tongue, bade me begone and carry it to the Judas who had sent me. It was the first time I had heard the name applied to Mr. Henry; I was staggered besides at her sudden vehemence of word and manner; and got forth from the room, under this shower of curses, like a beaten dog. But even then I was not quit; for the vixen threw up her window and, leaning forth, continued to revile me as I went up the wynd; the free-traders, coming to the tavern door, joined in the mockery; and one had even the inhumanity to set upon me a very savage, small dog, which bit me in the ankle. This was a strong lesson, had I required one, to avoid ill company; and I rode home in much pain from the bite and considerable indignation of mind.

Mr. Henry was in the steward's room, affecting employment, but I could see he was only impatient to hear of my errand.

"Well?" says he, as soon as I came in; and when I had told him something of what passed, and that Jessie seemed an undeserving woman and far from grateful: "She is no friend to me," said he; "but indeed, Mackellar, I have few friends to boast of; and Jessie has some cause to be unjust. I need not dissemble what all the country knows: she was not very well used by one of our family." This was the first time I had heard him refer to the Master even distantly; and I think he found his tongue rebellious, even for that much; but presently he resumed. "This is why I would have nothing said. It would give pain to Mrs. Henry—and to my father," he added with another flush.

"Mr. Henry," said I, "if you will take a freedom at my hands, I would tell you to let that woman be. What service is your money to the like of her? She has no sobriety and no economy; as for gratitude, you will as soon get milk from a whinstone; and if you will pretermit your bounty, it will make no change at all but just to save the ankles of your messengers."

Mr. Henry smiled. "But I am grieved about your ankle," said he, the next moment, with a proper gravity.

"And observe," I continued, "I give you this advice upon consideration; and yet my heart was touched for the woman in the beginning."

"Why, there it is, you see!" said Mr. Henry. "And you are to remember that I knew her once a very decent lass. Besides which, although I speak little of my family, I think much of its repute."

And with that he broke up the talk, which was the first we had together in such confidence. But the same afternoon I had the proof that his father was perfectly acquainted with the business, and that it was only from his wife that Mr. Henry kept it secret.

"I fear you had a painful errand to-day," says my lord to me: "for which, as it enters in no way among your duties, I wish to thank you, and to remind you at the same time (in case Mr. Henry should have neglected) how very desirable it is that no word of it should reach my daughter. Reflections on the dead, Mr. Mackellar, are doubly painful."

Anger glowed in my heart; and I could have told my lord to his face how little he had to do, bolstering up the image of the dead in Mrs. Henry's heart, and how much better he were employed to shatter that false idol. For by this time I saw very well how the land lay between my patron and his wife.

My pen is clear enough to tell a plain tale; but to render the effect of an infinity of small things, not one great enough in itself to be narrated; and to translate the story of looks, and the message of voices when they are saying no great matter; and to put in half a page the essence of near eighteen months: this is what I despair to accomplish. The fault, to be very blunt, lay all in Mrs. Henry. She felt it a merit to have consented to the marriage, and she took it like a martyrdom; in which my lord, whether he knew it or not, fomented her. She made a merit, besides, of her constancy to the dead; though its name, to a nicer conscience, should have seemed rather disloyalty to the living; and here also my lord gave her his countenance. I suppose he was glad to talk of his loss, and ashamed to dwell on it with Mr. Henry. Certainly, at least, he made a little coterie apart in that family of three, and it was the husband who was shut out. It seems it was an old custom when the family were alone in Durrisdeer, that my lord should take his wine to the chimney-side, and Miss Alison (instead of withdrawing) should bring a stool to his knee and chatter to him privately; and after she had become my patron's wife, the same manner of doing was continued. It should have been pleasant to behold this ancient gentleman so loving with his daughter; but I was too much a partizan of Mr. Henry's to be anything but wroth at his exclusion. Many's the time I have seen him make an obvious resolve, quit the table, and go and join himself to his wife and my Lord Durrisdeer; and on their part, they were never backward to make him welcome, turned to him smilingly as to an intruding child, and took him into their talk with an effort so ill-concealed that he was soon back again beside me at the table; whence (so great is the hall of Durrisdeer) we could but hear the murmur of voices at the chimney. There he would sit and watch, and I along with him; and sometimes by my lord's head sorrowfully shaken, or his hand laid on Mrs. Henry's head, or hers upon his knee as if in consolation, or sometimes by an exchange of tearful looks, we would draw our conclusion that the talk had gone to the old subject and the shadow of the dead was in the hall.

I have hours when I blame Mr. Henry for taking all too patiently; yet we are to remember he was married in pity, and accepted his wife upon that term. And indeed he had small encouragement to make a stand. Once, I remember, he announced he had found a man to replace the pane of the stained window; which, as it was he that managed all the business, was a thing clearly within his attributions. But to the Master's fanciers, that pane was like a relic; and on the first word of any change, the blood flew to Mrs. Henry's face.

"I wonder at you!" she cried.

"I wonder at myself," says Mr. Henry, with more of bitterness than I had ever heard him to express.

Thereupon my old lord stepped in with his smooth talk, so that before the meal was at an end all seemed forgotten; only that, after dinner, when the pair had withdrawn as usual to the chimney-side, we could see her weeping with her head upon his knee. Mr. Henry kept up the talk with me upon some topic of the estates—he could speak of little else but business, and was never the best of company; but he kept it up that day with more continuity, his eye straying ever and again to the chimney and his voice changing to another key, but without check of delivery. The pane, however, was not replaced, and I believe he counted it a great defeat.

Whether he was stout enough or no, God knows he was kind enough. Mrs. Henry had a manner of condescension with him, such as (in a wife) would have pricked my vanity into an ulcer; he took it like a favor. She held him at the staff's end; forgot and then remembered and unbent to him, as we do to children; burdened him with cold kindness; reproved him with a change of color and a bitten lip, like one shamed by his disgrace; ordered him with a look of the eye, when she was off her guard; when she was on the watch, pleaded with him for the most natural attentions as though they were unheard-of favors. And to all this, he replied with the most unwearied service; loving, as folk say, the very ground she trod on, and carrying that love in his eyes as bright as a lamp. When Miss Katharine was to be born, nothing would serve but he must stay in the room behind the head of the bed. There he sat, as white (they tell me) as a sheet and the sweat dropping from his brow; and the handkerchief he had in his hand was crushed into a little ball no bigger than a musket bullet. Nor could he bear the sight of Miss Katharine for many a day; indeed I doubt if he was ever what he should have been to my young lady; for the which want of natural feeling he was loudly blamed.

Such was the state of this family down to the 7th of April, 1749, when there befel the first of that series of events which were to break so many hearts and lose so many lives.

On that day I was sitting in my room a little before supper, when John Paul burst open the door with no civility of knocking, and told me there was one below that wished to speak with the steward; sneering at the name of my office.

I asked what manner of man, and what his name was; and this disclosed the cause of John's ill humor; for it appeared the visitor refused to name himself except to me, a sore affront to the majordomo's consequence.

"Well," said I, smiling a little, "I will see what he wants."

I found in the entrance hall a big man very plainly habited and wrapped in a sea-cloak, like one new landed, as indeed he was. Not far off Macconochie was standing, with his tongue out of his mouth and his hand upon his chin, like a dull fellow thinking hard; and the stranger, who had brought his cloak about his face, appeared uneasy. He had no sooner seen me coming than he went to meet me with an effusive manner.

"My dear man," said he, "a thousand apologies for disturbing you, but I'm in the most awkward position. And there's a son of a ramrod there that I should know the looks of, and more betoken I believe that he knows mine. Being in this family, sir, and in a place of some responsibility (which was the cause I took the liberty to send for you), you are doubtless of the honest party?"

"You may be sure at least," says I, "that all of that party are quite safe in Durrisdeer."

"My dear man, it is my very thought," says he. "You see I have just been set on shore here by a very honest man, whose name I can not remember, and who is to stand off and on for me till morning, at some danger to himself; and, to be clear with you, I am a little concerned lest it should be at some to me. I have saved my life so often, Mr.—I forget your name, which is a very good one—that, faith, I would be very loath to lose it after all. And the son of a ramrod, whom I believe I saw before Carlisle—"

"Oh, sir," said I, "you can trust Macconochie until to-morrow."

"Well, and it's a delight to hear you say so," says the stranger. "The truth is that my name is not a very suitable one in this country of Scotland. With a gentleman like you, my dear man, I would have no concealments of course; and by your leave, I'll just breathe it in your ear. They call me Francis Burke—Colonel Francis Burke; and I am here, at a most damnable risk to myself, to see your masters—if you'll excuse me, my good man, for giving them the name, for I'm sure it's a circumstance I would never have guessed from your appearance. And if you would just be so very obliging as to take my name to them, you might say that I come bearing letters which I am sure they will be very rejoiced to have the reading of."

Colonel Francis Burke was one of the prince's Irishmen, that did his cause such an infinity of hurt and were so much distasted of the Scots at the time of the rebellion; and it came at once into my mind how the Master of Ballantrae had astonished all men by going with that party. In the same moment a strong foreboding of the truth possessed my soul.

"If you will step in here," said I, opening a chamber door, "I will let my lord know."

"And I am sure it's very good of you, Mr. What-is-your-name," says the colonel.

Up to the hall I went, slow footed. There they were all three, my old lord in his place, Mrs. Henry at work by the window, Mr. Henry (as was much his custom) pacing the low end. In the midst was the table laid for supper. I told them briefly what I had to say. My old lord lay back in his seat. Mrs. Henry sprung up standing with a mechanical motion, and she and her husband stared at each other's eyes across the room; it was the strangest, challenging look these two exchanged, and as they looked, the color faded in their faces. Then Mr. Henry turned to me; not to speak, only to sign with his finger; but that was enough, and I went down again for the colonel.

When we returned, these three were in much the same position I had left them in; I believe no word had passed.

"My Lord Durrisdeer, no doubt?" says the colonel, bowing, and my lord bowed in answer. "And this," continues the colonel, "should be the Master of Ballantrae?"

"I have never taken that name," said Mr. Henry; "but I am Henry Durie at your service."

Then the colonel turns to Mrs. Henry, bowing with his hat upon his heart and the most killing airs of gallantry. "There can be no mistake about so fine a figure of a lady," says he. "I address the seductive Miss Alison, of whom I have so often heard?"

Once more husband and wife exchanged a look.

"I am Mrs. Henry Durie," said she; "but before my marriage my name was Alison Graeme."

Then my lord spoke up. "I am an old man, Colonel Burke," said he, "and a frail one. It will be mercy on your part to be expeditious. Do you bring me news of—" he hesitated, and then the words broke from him with a singular change of voice—"my son?"

"My dear lord, I will be round with you like a soldier," said the colonel. "I do."

My lord held out a wavering hand; he seemed to wave a signal, but whether it was to give him time or to speak on, was more than we could guess. At length, he got out the one word—"Good?"

"Why, the very best in the creation!" cries the colonel. "For my good friend and admired comrade is at this hour in the fine city of Paris, and as like as not, if I know anything of his habits, he will be drawing in his chair to a piece of dinner. Bedad, I believe the lady's fainting."

Mrs. Henry was indeed the color of death, and drooped against the window frame. But when Mr. Henry made a movement as if to run to her, she straightened with a sort of shiver. "I am well," she said, with her white lips.

Mr. Henry stopped, and his face had a strong twitch of anger. The next moment he had turned to the colonel. "You must not blame yourself," says he, "for this effect on Mrs. Durie. It is only natural; we were all brought up like brother and sister."

Mrs. Henry looked at her husband with something like relief or even gratitude. In my way of thinking, that speech was the first step he made in her good graces.

"You must try to forgive me, Mrs. Durie, for indeed and I am just an Irish savage," said the colonel, "and I deserve to be shot for not breaking the matter more artistically to a lady. But here are the Master's own letters, one for each of the three of you, and to be sure (if I know anything of my friend's genius) he will tell his own story with a better grace."

He brought the three letters forth as he spoke, arranged them by their superscriptions, presented the first to my lord, who took it greedily, and advanced toward Mrs. Henry holding out the second.

But the lady waved it back. "To my husband," says she, with a choked voice.

The colonel was a quick man, but at this he was somewhat nonplused. "To be sure," says he; "how very dull of me! To be sure." But he still held the letter.

At last Mr. Henry reached forth his hand, and there was nothing to be done but give it up. Mr. Henry took the letters (both hers and his own) and looked upon their outside, with his brows knit hard, as if he were thinking. He had surprised me all through by his excellent behavior, but he was to excel himself now.

"Let me give you a hand to your room," said he to his wife. "This has come something of the suddenest, and at any rate you will wish to read your letter by yourself."

Again she looked upon him with the same thought of wonder, but he gave her no time, coming straight to where she stood. "It will be better so, believe me," said he, "and Colonel Burke is too considerate not to excuse you." And with that he took her hand by the fingers and led her from the hall.

Mrs. Henry returned no more that night, and when Mr. Henry went to visit her next morning, as I heard long afterward, she gave him the letter again, still unopened.

"Oh, read it and be done!" he had cried.

"Spare me that," said she.

And by these two speeches, to my way of thinking, each undid a great part of what they had previously done well. But the letter, sure enough, came into my hands and by me was burned, unopened.

To be very exact as to the adventures of the Master after Culloden I wrote not long ago to Colonel Burke, now a Chevalier of the Order of St. Louis, begging him for some notes in writing, since I could scarce depend upon my memory at so great an interval. To confess the truth I have been somewhat embarrassed by his response, for he sent me the complete memoirs of his life, touching only in places on the Master, running to a much greater length than my whole story, and not everywhere (as it seems to me) designed for edification. He begged in his letter, dated from Ettenheim, that I would find a publisher for the whole after I had made what use of it I required, and I think I shall best answer my own purpose and fulfil his wishes by printing certain parts of it in full. In this way my readers will have a detailed and I believe a very genuine account of some essential matters, and if any publisher should take a fancy to the chevalier's manner of narration he knows where to apply for the rest, of which there is plenty at his service. I put in my first extract here, so that it may stand in the place of what the chevalier told us over our wine in the hall of Durrisdeer; but you are to suppose it was not the brutal fact, but a very varnished version that he offered to my lord.

THE MASTER'S WANDERINGS

From the Memoirs of the Chevalier de Burke

. . . I LEFT Ruthven (it's hardly necessary to remark) with much greater satisfaction than I had come to it, but whether I missed my way in the deserts or whether my companions failed me I soon found myself alone. This was a predicament very disagreeable, for I never understood this horrid country or savage people, and the last stroke of the prince's withdrawal had made us of the Irish more unpopular than ever. I was reflecting on my poor chances, when I saw another horseman on the hill, whom I supposed at first to have been a phantom, the news of his death in the very front at Culloden being current in the army generally. This was the Master of Ballantrae, my Lord Durrisdeer's son, a young nobleman of the rarest gallantry and parts, and equally designed by nature to adorn a court and to reap laurels in the field. Our meeting was the more welcome to both, as he was one of the few Scots who had used the Irish with consideration and as he might now be of very high utility in aiding my escape. Yet what founded our particular friendship was a circumstance by itself as romantic as any fable of King Arthur.

This was on the second day of our flight, after we had slept one night in the rain upon the inclination of a mountain. There was an Appin man, Alan Black Stewart (or some such name,[1] but I have seen him since in France) who chanced to be passing the same way, and had a jealousy of my companion. Very uncivil expressions were exchanged; and Stewart calls upon the Master to alight and have it out.

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[1] *Note by Mr. Mackellar.*—Should this not be Alan *Breck* Stewart, afterward notorious as the Appin murderer? The chevalier is sometimes very weak on names.

"Why, Mr. Stewart," says the Master, "I think at the present time I would prefer to run a race with you." And with the word claps spurs to his horse.

Stewart ran after us, a childish thing to do, for more than a mile; and I could not help laughing as I looked back at last and saw him on a hill holding his hand to his side and nearly burst with running.

"But all the same," I could not help saying to my companion, "I would let no man run after me for any such proper purpose and not give him his desire. It was a good jest, but it smells a trifle cowardly."

He bent his brows at me.

"I do pretty well," says he, "when I saddle myself with the most unpopular man in Scotland, and let that suffice for courage."

"Oh, bedad," says I, "I could show you a more unpopular with the naked eye. And if you like not my company, you can 'saddle' yourself on some one else."

"Colonel Burke," says he, "do not let us quarrel; and to that effect, let me assure you I am the least patient man in the world."

"I am as little patient as yourself," said I. "I care not who knows that."

"At this rate," said he, reining in, "we shall not go very far. And I propose we do one of two things upon the instant: either quarrel and be done, or make a sure bargain to bear everything at each other's hands."

"Like a pair of brothers?" said I.

"I said no such foolishness," he replied. "I have a brother of my own, and I think no more of him than of a colewort. But if we are to have our noses rubbed together in this course of flight, let us each dare to be ourselves like savages, and each swear that he will neither resent nor deprecate the other. I am a pretty bad fellow at bottom, and I find the pretense of virtues very irksome."

"Oh, I am as bad as yourself," said I. "There is no skim milk in Francis Burke. But which is it to be? Fight or make friends?"

"Why," says he, "I think it will be the best manner to spin a coin for it."

This proposition was too highly chivalrous not to take my fancy; and strange as it may seem of two well-born gentlemen of to-day we spun a half-crown (like a pair of ancient paladins) whether we were to cut each other's throats or be sworn friends. A more romantic circumstance can rarely have occurred; and it is one of those points in my memoirs, by which we may see the old tales of Homer and the poets are equally true to-day, at least of the noble and genteel. The coin fell for peace, and we shook hands upon our bargain. And then it was that my companion explained to me his thought in running away from Mr. Stewart, which was certainly worthy of his political intellect. The report of his death, he said, was a great guard to him; Mr. Stewart, having recognized him, had become a danger; and he had taken the briefest road to that gentleman's silence. "For," says he, "Alan Black is too vain a man to narrate any such story of himself."

Toward afternoon we came down to the shores of that loch for which we were heading; and there was the ship but newly come to anchor. She was the *Sainte-Marie-des-Anges,* out of the port of Havre-de-Grace. The Master, after we had signaled for a boat, asked me if I knew the captain. I told him he was a countryman of mine, of the most unblemished integrity, but, I was afraid, a rather timorous man.

"No matter," says he. "For all that, he should certainly hear the truth."

I asked him if he meant about the battle; for if the captain once knew the standard was down, he would certainly put to sea again at once.

"And even then!" said he; "the arms are now of no sort of utility."

"My dear man," said I, "who thinks of the arms? But to be sure we must remember our friends. They will be close upon our heels, perhaps the prince himself, and if the ship be gone, a great number of valuable lives may be imperiled."

"The captain and the crew have lives also, if you come to that," says Ballantrae.

This I declared was but a quibble, and that I would not hear of the captain being told; and then it was that Ballantrae made me a witty answer, for the sake of which (and also because I have been blamed myself in this business of the *Sainte-Marie-des-Anges*) I have related the whole conversation as it passed.

"Frank," says he, "remember our bargain. I must not object to your holding your tongue, which I hereby even encourage you to do; but by the same terms, you are not to resent my telling."

I could not help laughing at this; though I still forewarned him what would come of it.

"The devil may come of it for what I care," says the reckless fellow. "I have always done exactly as I felt inclined."

As is well known, my prediction came true. The captain had no sooner heard the news than he cut his cable and to sea again; and before morning broke we were in the Great Minch.

The ship was very old, and the skipper although the most honest of men (and Irish too) was one of the least capable. The wind blew very boisterous, and the sea raged extremely. All that day we had little heart whether to eat or drink; went early to rest in some concern of mind; and (as if to give us a lesson) in the night the wind chopped suddenly into the northeast, and blew a hurricane. We were awaked by the dreadful thunder of the tempest and the stamping of the mariners on deck; so that I supposed our last hour was certainly come; and the terror of my mind was increased out of all measure by Ballantrae, who mocked at my devotions. It is in hours like these that a man of any piety appears in his true light, and we find (what we are taught as babes) the small trust that can be set in worldly friends; I would be unworthy of my religion if I let this pass without particular remark. For three days we lay in the dark in the cabin, and had but a biscuit to nibble. On the fourth the wind fell, leaving the ship dismasted and heaving on vast billows. The captain had not a guess of whither we were blown; he was stark ignorant of his trade, and could do naught but bless the Holy Virgin; a very good thing too, but scarce the whole of seamanship. It seemed our one hope was to be picked up by another vessel; and if that should prove to be an English ship, it might be no great blessing to the master and myself.

The fifth and sixth days we tossed there helpless. The seventh, some sail was got on her, but she was an unwieldy vessel at the best, and we made little but leeway. All the time, indeed, we had been drifting to the south and west, and during the tempest must have driven in that direction with unheard-of violence. The ninth dawn was cold and black, with a great sea running, and every mark of foul weather. In this situation, we were overjoyed to sight a small ship on the horizon, and to perceive her go about and head for the *Sainte-Marie*. But our gratification did not very long endure; for when she had laid to and lowered a boat, it was immediately filled with disorderly fellows, who sung and shouted as they pulled across to us, and swarmed in on our deck with bare cutlases, cursing loudly. Their leader was a horrible villain, with his face blacked and his whiskers curled in ringlets: Teach, his name; a most notorious pirate. He stamped about the deck, raving and crying out that his name was Satan and his ship was called "Hell." There was something about him like a wicked child or a half-witted person, that daunted me beyond expression. I whispered in the ear of Ballantrae that I would not be the last to volunteer and only prayed God they might be short of hands; he approved my purpose with a nod.

"Bedad," said I to Master Teach, "if you are Satan, here is a devil for ye."

The word pleased him; and (not to dwell upon these shocking incidents) Ballantrae and I and two others were taken for recruits, while the skipper and all the rest were cast into the sea by the method of walking the plank. It was the first time I had seen this done; my heart died within me at the spectacle; and Master Teach or one of his acolytes (for my head was too much lost to be precise) remarked upon my pale face in a very alarming manner. I had the strength to cut a step or two of a jig and cry out some ribaldry, which saved me for that time; but my legs were like water when I must get down into the skiff among these miscreants; and what with my horror of my company and fear of the monstrous billows, it was all I could do to keep an Irish tongue and break a jest or two as we were pulled aboard. By the blessing of God, there was a fiddle in the pirate ship, which I had no sooner seen than I fell upon; and in my quality of crowder, I had the heavenly good luck to get favor in their eyes. *Crowding Pat* was the name they dubbed me with; and it was little I cared for a name so long as my skin was whole.

What kind of a pandemonium that vessel was, I can not describe, but she was commanded by a lunatic, and might be called a floating Bedlam. Drinking, roaring, singing, quarreling, dancing, they were never all sober at one time; and there were days together when, if a squall had supervened, it must have sent us to the bottom, or if a king's ship had come along, it would have found us quite helpless for defense. Once or twice we sighted a sail, and if we were sober enough, overhauled it, God forgive us! and if we were all too drunk, she got away, and I would bless the saints under my breath. Teach ruled, if you can call that rule which brought no order, by the terror he created; and I observed the man was very vain of his position. I have known marshals of France, ay, and even Highland chieftains that were less openly puffed up; which throws a singular light on the pursuit of honor and glory. Indeed the longer we live, the more we perceive the sagacity of Aristotle and the other old philosophers; and though I have all my life been eager for legitimate distinctions, I can lay my hand upon my heart, at the end of my career, and declare there is not one—no, nor yet life itself—which is worth acquiring or preserving at the slightest cost of dignity.

It was long before I got private speech of Ballantrae; but at length one night we crept out upon the boltsprit, when the rest were better employed, and commiserated our position.

"None can deliver us but the saints," said I.

"My mind is very different," said Ballantrae; "for I am going to deliver myself. This Teach is the poorest creature possible; we make no profit of him and lie continually open to capture; and," says he, "I am not going to be a tarry pirate for nothing, nor yet to hang in chains if I can help it." And he told me what was in his mind to better the state of the ship in the way of discipline, which would give us safety for the present, and a sooner hope of deliverance when they should have gained enough and should break up their company.

I confessed to him ingenuously that my nerve was quite shook amid these horrible surroundings, and I durst scarce tell him to count upon me.

"I am not very easy frightened," said he, "nor very easy beat."

A few days after there befell an accident which had nearly hanged us all, and offers the most extraordinary picture of the folly that ruled in our concerns. We were all pretty drunk; and some bedlamite spying a sail, Teach put the ship about in chase without a glance, and we began to bustle up the arms and boast of the horrors that should follow. I observed Ballantrae stood quiet in the bows, looking under the shade of his hand; but for my part, true to my policy among these savages, I was at work with the busiest, and passing Irish jests for their diversion.

"Run up the colors," cries Teach. "Show the ——s the Jolly Roger!"

It was the merest drunken braggadocio at such a stage, and might have lost us a valuable prize; but I thought it no part of mine to reason, and I ran up the black flag with my own hand.

Ballantrae steps presently aft with a smile upon his face.

"You may perhaps like to know, you drunken dog," says he, "that you are chasing a king's ship."

Teach roared him the lie; but he ran at the same time to the bulwarks, and so did they all. I have never seen so many drunken men struck suddenly sober. The cruiser had gone about, upon our impudent display of colors; she was just then filling on the new tack; her ensign blew out quite plain to see; and even as we stared, there came a puff of smoke, and then a report, and a shot plunged in the waves a good way short of us. Some ran to the ropes and got the *Sarah* round with an incredible swiftness. One fellow fell on the rum barrel, which stood broached upon the deck, and rolled it promptly overboard. On my part, I made for the Jolly Roger, struck it, tossed it in the sea, and could have flung myself after, so vexed was I with our mismanagement. As for Teach, he grew as pale as death, and incontinently went down to his cabin. Only twice he came on deck that afternoon; went to the taffrail; took a long look at the king's ship, which was still on the horizon heading after us; and then, without speech, back to his cabin. You may say he deserted us; and if it had not been for one very capable sailor we had on board, and for the lightness of the airs that blew all day, we must certainly have gone to the yard-arm.

It is to be supposed Teach was humiliated, and perhaps alarmed for his position with the crew; and the way in which he set about regaining what he had lost was highly characteristic of the man. Early next day we smelled him burning sulphur in his cabin and crying out of "Hell, hell!" which was well understood among the crew, and filled their minds with apprehension. Presently he comes on deck, a perfect figure of fun, his face blacked, his hair and whiskers curled, his belt stuck full of pistols, chewing bits of glass so that the blood ran down his chin, and brandishing a dirk. I do not know if he had taken these manners from the Indians of America, where he was a native; but such was his way, and he would always thus announce that he was wound up to horrid deeds. The first that came near him was the fellow who had sent the rum overboard the day before; him he stabbed to the heart, damning him for a mutineer; and then he capered about the body, raving and swearing and daring us to come on. It was the silliest exhibition; and yet dangerous too, for the cowardly fellow was plainly working himself up to another murder.

All of a sudden Ballantrae stepped forth. "Have done with this play-acting," says he. "Do you think to frighten us with making faces? We saw nothing of you yesterday when you were wanted; and we did well without you, let me tell you that."

There was a murmur and a movement in the crew of pleasure and alarm, I thought, in nearly equal parts. As for Teach, he gave a barbarous howl, and swung his dirk to fling it, an art in which (like many seamen) he was very expert.

"Knock that out of his hand!" says Ballantrae, so sudden and sharp that my arm obeyed him before my mind had understood.

Teach stood like one stupid, never thinking on his pistols.

"Go down to your cabin," cries Ballantrae, "and come on deck again when you are sober. Do you think we are going to hang for you, you black-faced, half-witted drunken brute and butcher? Go down!" And he stamped his foot at him with such a sudden smartness that Teach fairly ran for it to the companion.

"And now, mates," says Ballantrae, "a word with you. I don't know if you are gentlemen of fortune for the fun of the thing; but I am not. I want to make money, and get ashore again, and spend it like a man. And on one thing my mind is made up: I will not hang if I can help it. Come: give me a hint; I'm only a beginner! Is there no way to get a little discipline and common sense about this business?"

One of the men spoke up: he said by rights they should have a quartermaster; and no sooner was the word out of his mouth, than they were all of that opinion. The thing went by acclamation; Ballantrae was made quartermaster, the rum was put in his charge, laws were passed in imitation of those of a pirate by the name of Roberts; and the last proposal was to make an end of Teach. But Ballantrae was afraid of a more efficient captain, who might be a counterweight to himself, and he opposed this stoutly. Teach, he said, was good enough to board ships and frighten fools with his blacked face and swearing; we could scarce get a better man than Teach for that; and besides, as the man was now disconsidered and as good as deposed, we might reduce his proportion of the plunder. This carried it; Teach's share was cut down to a mere derision, being actually less than mine; and there remained only two points; whether he would consent, and who was to announce to him this resolution.

"Do not let that stick you," says Ballantrae, "I will do that."

And he stepped to the companion and down alone into the cabin to face that drunken savage.

"This is the man for us," cries one of the hands. "Three cheers for the quartermaster!" which were given with a will, my voice among the loudest, and I dare say these plaudits had their effect on Master Teach in the cabin, as we have seen of late days how shouting in the streets may trouble even the minds of legislators.

What passed precisely was never known, though some of the heads of it came to the surface later on; and we were all amazed as well as gratified when Ballantrae came on deck with Teach upon his arm, and announced that all had been consented.

I pass swiftly over those twelve or fifteen months in which we continued to keep the sea in the North Atlantic, getting our food and water from the ships we overhauled and doing on the whole a pretty fortunate business. Sure no one could wish to read anything so ungenteel as the memoirs of a pirate, even an unwilling one like me! Things went extremely better with our designs, and Ballantrae kept his lead to my admiration from that day forth. I would be tempted to suppose that a gentleman must everywhere be first, even aboard a rover; but my birth is every whit as good as any Scottish lord's, and I am not ashamed to confess that I stayed Crowding Pat until the end, and was not much better than the crew's buffoon. Indeed it was no scene to bring out my merits. My health suffered from a variety of reasons; I was more at home to the last on a horse's back than a ship's deck; and to be ingenuous, the fear of the sea was constantly in my mind, battling with the fear of my companions. I need not cry myself up for courage; I have done well on many fields under the eyes of famous generals, and earned my late advancement by an act of the most distinguished valor before many witnesses. But when we must proceed on one of our abordages, the heart of Francis Burke was in his boots; the little egg-shell skiff in which we must set forth, the horrible heaving of the vast billows, the height of the ship that we must scale, the thought of how many might be there in garrison upon their legitimate defense, the scowling heavens which (in that climate) so often looked darkly upon our exploits, and the mere crying of the wind in my ears, were all considerations most unpalatable to my valor. Besides which, as I was always a creature of the nicest sensibility, the scenes that must follow on our success tempted me as little as the chances of defeat. Twice we found women on board; and though I have seen towns sacked, and of late days in France some very horrid public tumults, there was something in the smallness of the numbers engaged and the bleak, dangerous sea-surroundings that made these acts of piracy far the most revolting. I confess ingenuously I could never proceed, unless I was three parts drunk; it was the same even with the crew; Teach himself was fit for no enterprise till he was full of rum; and it was one of the most difficult parts of Ballantrae's performance to serve us with liquor in the proper quantities. Even this he did to admiration; being upon the whole the most capable man I ever met with, and the one of the most natural genius. He did not even scrape favor with the crew, as I did, by continual buffoonery made upon a very anxious heart; but preserved on most occasions a great deal of gravity and distance; so that he was like a parent among a family of young children or a schoolmaster with his boys. What made his part the harder to perform, the men were most inveterate grumblers; Ballantrae's discipline, little as it was, was yet irksome to their love of license; and what was worse, being kept sober they had time to think. Some of them accordingly would fall to repenting their abominable crimes; one in particular, who was a good Catholic and with whom I would sometimes steal apart for prayer; above all in bad weather, fogs, lashing rain and the like, when we would be the less observed; and I am sure no two criminals in the cart have ever performed their devotions with more anxious sincerity. But the rest, having no such grounds of hope, fell to another pastime, that of computation. All day long they would be telling up their shares or glooming over the result. I have said we were pretty fortunate. But an observation fails to be made: that in this world, in no business that I have tried, do the profits rise to a man's expectations. We found many ships and took many; yet few of them contained much money, their goods were usually nothing to our purpose—what did we want with a cargo of plows or even of tobacco?—and it is quite a painful reflection how many whole crews we have made to walk the plank for no more than a stock of biscuit or an anker or two of spirit.

In the mean while, our ship was growing very foul, and it was high time we should make for our *port de carrénage,* which was in the estuary of a river among swamps. It was openly understood that we should then break up and go and squander our proportions of the spoil; and this made every man greedy of a little more, so that our decision was delayed from day to day. What finally decided matters was a trifling accident, such as an ignorant person might suppose incidental to our way of life. But here I must explain: on only one of all the ships we boarded—the first on which we found women—did we meet with any genuine resistance. On that occasion we had two men killed, and several injured, and if it had not been for the gallantry of Ballantrae, we had surely been beat back at last. Everywhere else the defense (where there was any at all) was what the worst troops in Europe would have laughed at; so that the most dangerous part of our employment was to clamber up the side of the ship; and I have even known the poor souls on board to cast us a line, so eager were they to volunteer instead of walking the plank. This constant immunity had made our fellows very soft, so that I understood how Teach had made so deep a mark upon their minds; for indeed the company of that lunatic was the chief danger in our way of life. The accident to which I have referred was this. We had sighted a little full-rigged ship very close under our board in a haze; she sailed near as well as we did—I should be near the truth if I said near as ill; and we cleared the bow chaser to see if we could bring a spar or two about their ears. The swell was exceeding great; the motion of the ship beyond description; it was little wonder if our gunners should fire thrice and be still quite broad of what they aimed at. But in the mean while the chase had cleared a stern gun, the thickness of the air concealing them; being better marksmen, their first shot struck us in the bows, knocked our two gunners into mincemeat, so that we were all sprinkled with the blood, and plunged through the deck into the forecastle, where we slept. Ballantrae would have held on; indeed there was nothing in this *contretemps* to affect the mind of any soldier; but he had a quick perception of the men's wishes, and it was plain this lucky shot had given them a sickener of their trade. In a moment they were all of one mind: the chase was drawing away from us, it was needless to hold on, the *Sarah* was too foul to overhaul a bottle, it was mere foolery to keep the sea with her; and on these pretended grounds her head was incontinently put about and the course laid for the river. It was strange to see what merriment fell on that ship's company, and how they stamped about the deck jesting, and each computing what increase had come to his share by the death of the two gunners.

We were nine days making our port, so light were the airs we had to sail on, so foul the ship's bottom; but early on the tenth, before dawn, and in a light, lifting haze, we passed the head. A little after, the haze lifted, and fell again, showing us a cruiser very close. This was a sore blow, happening so near our refuge. There was a great debate of whether she had seen us, and if so whether it was likely they had recognized the *Sarah*. We were very careful, by destroying every member of those crews we overhauled, to leave no evidence as to our own persons; but the appearance of the *Sarah* herself we could not keep so private; and above all of late, since she had been foul and we had pursued many ships without success, it was plain that her description had been often published. I supposed this alert would have made us separate upon the instant. But here again that original genius of Ballantrae's had a surprise in store for me. He and Teach (and it was the most remarkable step of his success) had gone hand in hand since the first day of his appointment. I often questioned him upon the fact, and never got an answer but once, when he told me he and Teach had an understanding "which would very much surprise the crew if they should hear of it, and would surprise himself a good deal if it was carried out." Well, here again he and Teach were of a mind; and by their joint procurement, the anchor was no sooner down than the whole crew went off on a scene of drunkenness indescribable. By afternoon we were a mere shipful of lunatical persons, throwing of things overboard, howling of different songs at the same time, quarreling and falling together and then forgetting our quarrels to embrace. Ballantrae had bidden me drink nothing and feign drunkenness as I valued my life; and I have never passed a day so wearisomely, lying the best part of the time upon the forecastle and watching the swamps and thickets by which our little basin was entirely surrounded for the eye. A little after dusk Ballantrae stumbled up to my side, feigned to fall, with a drunken laugh, and before he got his feet again whispered to me to "reel down into the cabin and seem to fall asleep upon a locker, for there would be need of me soon." I did as I was told, and coming into the cabin, where it was quite dark, let myself fall on the first locker. There was a man there already: by the way he stirred and threw me off, I could not think he was much in liquor; and yet when I had found another place, he seemed to continue to sleep on. My heart now beat very hard, for I saw some desperate matter was in act. Presently down came Ballantrae, lighted the lamp, looked about the cabin, nodded as if pleased, and on deck again without a word. I peered out from between my fingers, and saw there were three of us slumbering or feigning to slumber, on the lockers: myself, one Dutton and one Grady, both resolute men.

On deck the rest were got to a pitch of revelry quite beyond the bounds of what is human; so that no reasonable name can describe the sounds they were now making. I have heard many a drunken bout in my time, many on board that very *Sarah,* but never anything the least like this, which made me early suppose the liquor had been tampered with. It was a long while before these yells and howls died out into a sort of miserable moaning, and then to silence; and it seemed a long while after that before Ballantrae came down again, this time with Teach upon his heels. The latter cursed at the sight of us three upon the lockers.

"Tut," says Ballantrae, "you might fire a pistol at their ears. You know what stuff they have been swallowing."

There was a hatch in the cabin floor, and under that the richest part of the booty was stored against the day of division. It fastened with a ring and three padlocks, the keys (for greater security) being divided: one to Teach, one to Ballantrae, and one to the mate, a man called Hammond. Yet I was amazed to see they were now all in the one hand; and yet more amazed (still looking through my fingers) to observe Ballantrae and Teach bring up several packets, four of them in all, very carefully made up and with a loop for carriage.

"And now," says Teach, "let us be going."

"One word," says Ballantrae. "I have discovered there is another man besides yourself who knows a private path across the swamp. And it seems it is shorter than yours."

Teach cried out in that case they were undone.

"I do not know that," says Ballantrae. "For there are several other circumstances with which I must acquaint you. First of all, there is no bullet in your pistols, which (if you remember) I was kind enough to load for both of us this morning. Secondly, as there is some one else who knows a passage, you must think it highly improbable I should saddle myself with a lunatic like you. Thirdly, these gentlemen (who need no longer pretend to be asleep) are those of my party, and will now proceed to gag and bind you to the mast; and when your men awaken (if they ever do awake after the drugs we have mingled in their liquor) I am sure they will be so obliging as to deliver you, and you will have no difficulty, I dare say, to explain the business of the keys."

Not a word said Teach, but looked at us like a frightened baby, as we gagged and bound him.

"Now you see, you moon-calf," said Ballantrae, "why we make four packets. Heretofore you have been called Captain Teach, but I think you are now rather Captain Learn."

That was our last word on board the *Sarah;* we four with our four packets lowered ourselves softly into a skiff, and left that ship behind us as silent as the grave, only for the moaning of some of the drunkards. There was a fog about breast-high on the waters; so that Dutton, who knew the passage, must stand on his feet to direct our rowing; and this, as it forced us to row gently, was the means of our deliverance.

We were yet but a little way from the ship, when it began to come gray, and the birds to fly abroad upon the water. All of a sudden Dutton clapped down upon his hams, and whispered us to be silent for our lives, and hearken. Sure enough, we heard a little faint creak of oars upon one hand, and then again, and further off, a creak of oars upon the other. It was clear we had been sighted yesterday in the morning; here were the cruiser's boats to cut us out; here we were defenseless in their very midst. Sure, never were poor souls more perilously placed; and as we lay there on our oars, praying God the mist might hold, the sweat poured from my brow. Presently we heard one of the boats, where we might have thrown a biscuit in her. "Softly, men," we heard an officer whisper; and I marveled they could not hear the drumming of my heart.

"Never mind the path," says Ballantrae, "we must get shelter anyhow; let us pull straight ahead for the sides of the basin."

This we did with the most anxious precaution, rowing, as best we could, upon our hands, and steering at a venture in the fog, which was (for all that) our only safety. But

Heaven guided us; we touched ground at a thicket; scrambled ashore with our treasure; and having no other way of concealment, and the mist beginning already to lighten, hove down the skiff and let her sink. We were still but new under cover when the sun rose; and at the same time, from the midst of the basin, a great shouting of seamen sprung up, and we knew the *Sarah* was being boarded. I heard afterward the officer that took her got great honor; and it's true the approach was creditably managed, but I think he had an easy capture when he came to board.[2]

I was still blessing the saints for my escape, when I became aware we were in trouble of another kind. We were here landed at random in a vast and dangerous swamp; and how to come at the path was a concern of doubt, fatigue, and peril. Dutton, indeed, was of opinion we should wait until the ship was gone, and fish up the skiff; for any delay would be more wise than to go blindly ahead in that morass. One went back accordingly to the basin-side and (peering through the thicket) saw the fog already quite drunk up and English colors flying on the *Sarah,* but no movement made to get her under way.

Our situation was now very doubtful. The swamp was an unhealthful place to linger in; we had been so greedy to bring treasures that we had brought but little food; it was highly desirable, besides, that we should get clear of the neighborhood and into the settlements before the news of the capture went abroad; and against all these considerations there was only the peril of the passage on the other side. I think it not wonderful we decided on the active part.

It was already blistering hot when we set forth to pass the marsh, or rather to strike the path, by compass. Dutton took the compass, and one or other of us three carried his proportion of the treasure; I promise you he kept a sharp eye to his rear, for it was like the man's soul that he must trust us with. The thicket was as close as a bush; the ground very treacherous, so that we often sunk in the most terrifying manner, and must go round about; the heat, besides, was stifling; the air singularly heavy, and the stinging insects abounded in such myriads that each of us walked under his own cloud. It has often been commented on how much better gentlemen of birth endure fatigue than persons of the rabble; so that walking officers, who must tramp in the dirt beside their men, shame them by their constancy. This was well to be observed in the present instance; for here were Ballantrae and I, two gentlemen of the highest breeding, on the one hand; and on the other, Grady, a common mariner, and a man nearly a giant in physical strength. The case of Dutton is not in point, for I confess he did as well as any of us.[3] But as for Grady, he began early to lament his case, tailed in the rear, refused to carry Dutton's packet when it came his turn, clamored continually for rum (of which we had too little) and at last even threatened us from behind with a cocked pistol, unless we should allow him rest. Ballantrae would have fought it out, I believe; but I prevailed with him the other way; and we made a stop and ate a meal. It seemed to benefit Grady little; he was in the rear again at once, growling and bemoaning his lot; and at last, by some carelessness, not having followed properly in our tracks, stumbled into a deep part of the slough where it was mostly water, gave some very dreadful screams, and before we could come to his aid, had sunk along with his booty. His fate and above all these screams of his appalled us to the soul; yet it was on the whole a fortunate circumstance and the means of our deliverance. For it moved Dutton to mount into a tree, whence he was able to perceive and to show me, who had climbed after him, a high piece of the wood which was a landmark for the path. He went forward the more carelessly, I must suppose; for presently we saw him sink a little down, draw up his feet and sink again, and so twice. Then he turned his face to us, pretty white.

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[2] *Note by Mr. Mackellar.*—This Teach of the *Sarah* must not be confused with the celebrated "Blackbeard." The dates and facts by no means tally. It is possible the second Teach may have at once borrowed the name and imitated the more excessive part of his manners from the first. Even the Master of Ballantrae could make admirers.

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[3] *Note by Mr. Mackellar.*—And is not this the whole explanation? since this Dutton, exactly like the officers, enjoyed the stimulus of some responsibility.

"Lend a hand," said he, "I am in a bad place."

"I don't know about that," says Ballantrae, standing still.

Dutton broke out into the most violent oaths, sinking a little lower as he did, so that the mud was nearly to his waist; and plucking a pistol from his belt, "Help me," he cries, "or die and be damned to you!"

"Nay," says Ballantrae, "I did but jest. I am coming." And he set down his own packet and Dutton's, which he was then carrying. "Do not venture near till we see if you are needed," said he to me, and went forward alone to where the man was bogged. He was quiet now, though he still held the pistol; and the marks of terror in his countenance were very moving to behold.

"For the Lord's sake," says he, "look sharp."

Ballantrae was now got close up. "Keep still," says he, and seemed to consider; and then "Reach out both your hands!"

Dutton laid down his pistol, and so watery was the top surface that it went clear out of sight; with an oath he stooped to snatch it; and as he did so Ballantrae leaned forth and stabbed him between the shoulders. Up went his hands over his head, I know not whether with the pain or to ward himself, and the next moment he doubled forward in the mud.

Ballantrae was already over the ankles, but he plucked himself out and came back to me, where I stood with my knees smiting one another. "The devil take you, Francis!" says he. "I believe you are a half-hearted fellow after all. I have only done justice on a pirate. And here we are quite clear of the *Sarah!* Who shall now say that we have dipped our hands in any irregularities?"

I assured him he did me injustice; but my sense of humanity was so much affected by the horridness of the fact that I could scarce find breath to answer with.

"Come," said he, "you must be more resolved. The need for this fellow ceased when he had shown you where the path ran; and you can not deny I would have been daft to let slip so fair an opportunity."

I could not deny but he was right in principle; nor yet could I refrain from shedding tears, of which I think no man of valor need have been ashamed; and it was not until I had a share of the rum that I was able to proceed. I repeat I am far from ashamed of my generous emotion; mercy is honorable in the warrior; and yet I can not altogether censure Ballantrae, whose step was really fortunate, as we struck the path without further misadventure, and the same night, about sundown, came to the edge of the morass.

We were too weary to seek far; on some dry sands, still warm with the day's sun, and close under a wood of pines, we lay down and were instantly plunged in sleep.

We awaked the next morning very early, and began with a sullen spirit a conversation that came near to end in blows. We were now cast on shore in the southern provinces, thousands of miles from any French settlement; a dreadful journey and a thousand perils lay in front of us; and sure, if there was ever need for amity, it was in such an hour. I must suppose that Ballantrae had suffered in his sense of what is truly polite; indeed, and there is nothing strange in the idea, after the sea-wolves we had consorted with so long; and as for myself he fubbed me off unhandsomely, and any gentleman would have resented his behavior.

I told him in what light I saw his conduct: he walked a little off, I following to upbraid him; and at last he stopped me with his hand.

"Frank," says he, "you know what we swore; and yet there is no oath invented would induce me to swallow such expressions, if I did not regard you with sincere affection. It is impossible you should doubt me there: I have given proofs. Dutton I had to take, because he knew the pass, and Grady because Dutton would not move without him; but what call was there to carry you along? You are a perpetual danger to me with your cursed Irish tongue. By rights you should now be in irons in the cruiser. And you quarrel with me like a baby for some trinkets!"

I considered this one of the most unhandsome speeches ever made; and indeed to this day I can scarce reconcile it to my notion of a gentleman that was my friend. I retorted upon him with his Scotch accent, of which he had not so much as some, but enough to be very barbarous and disgusting, as I told him plainly; and the affair would have gone to a great length, but for an alarming intervention.

We had got some way off upon the sand. The place where we had slept, with the packets lying undone and the money scattered openly, was now between us and the pines; and it was out of these the stranger must have come. There he was at least a great hulking fellow of the country, with a broadax on his shoulder, looking open-mouthed, now at the treasure which was just at his feet, and now at our disputation in which we had gone far enough to have weapons in our hands. We had no sooner observed him than he found his legs and made off again among the pines.

This was no scene to put our minds at rest; a couple of armed men in sea-clothes found quarreling over a treasure, not many miles from where a pirate had been captured—here was enough to bring the whole country about our ears. The quarrel was not even made up; it was blotted from our minds; and we got our packets together in the twinkling of an eye and made off, running with the best will in the world. But the trouble was, we did not know in what direction, and must continually return upon our steps. Ballantrae had indeed collected what he could from Dutton; but it's hard to travel upon hearsay; and the estuary, which spreads into a vast irregular harbor, turned us off upon every side with a new stretch of water.

We were near beside ourselves and already quite spent with running, when coming to the top of a dune, we saw we were again cut off by another ramification of the bay. This was a creek, however, very different from those that had arrested us before; being set in rocks, and so precipitously deep that a small vessel was able to lie alongside, made fast with a hawser; and her crew had laid a plank to the shore. Here they had lighted a fire and were sitting at their meal. As for the vessel herself, she was one of those they build in the Bermudas.

The love of gold and the great hatred that everybody has to pirates were motives of the most influential, and would certainly raise the country in our pursuit. Besides, it was now plain we were on some sort of straggling peninsula like the fingers of a hand; and the wrist, or passage to the mainland, which we should have taken at the first, was by this time not improbably secured. These considerations put us on a bolder counsel. For as long as we dared, looking every moment to hear sounds of the chase, we lay among some bushes on the top of the dune; and having by this means secured a little breath and recomposed our appearance, we strolled down at last, with a great affectation of carelessness, to the party by the fire.

It was a trader and his negroes, belonging to Albany in the province of New York, and now on the way home from the Indies with a cargo; his name I can not recall. We were amazed to learn he had put in here from terror of the *Sarah;* for we had no thought our exploits had been so notorious. As soon as the Albanian heard she had been taken the day before, he jumped to his feet, gave us a cup of spirits for our good news, and sent his negroes to get sail on the Bermudan. On our side, we profited by the dram to become more confidential, and at last offered ourselves as passengers. He looked askance at our tarry clothes and pistols, and replied civilly enough that he had scarce accommodation for himself; nor could either our prayers or our offers of money, in which we advanced pretty far, avail to shake him.

"I see you think ill of us," says Ballantrae, "but I will show you how well we think of you by telling you the truth. We are Jacobite fugitives, and there is a price upon our heads."

At this the Albanian was plainly moved a little. He asked us many questions as to the Scotch war, which Ballantrae very patiently answered. And then, with a wink, in a vulgar manner, "I guess you and your Prince Charlie got more than you cared about," said he.

"Bedad, and that we did," said I. "And, my dear man, I wish you would set a new example and give us just that much."

This I said in the Irish way, about which there is allowed to be something very engaging. It's a remarkable thing, and a testimony to the love with which our nation is regarded, that this address scarce ever fails in a handsome fellow. I can not tell how often I have seen a private soldier escape the horse, or a beggar wheedle out a good alms, by a touch of the brogue. And indeed, as soon as the Albanian had laughed at me I was pretty much at rest. Even then, however, he made many conditions and (for one thing) took away our arms, before he suffered us on board, which was the signal to cast off; so that in a moment after we were gliding down the bay with a good breeze and blessing the name of God for our deliverance. Almost in the mouth of the estuary we passed the cruiser, and a little after, the poor *Sarah* with her prize crew; and these were both sights to make us tremble. The Bermudan seemed a very safe place to be in, and our bold stroke to have been fortunately played, when we were thus reminded of the case of our companions. For all that, we had only exchanged traps, jumped out of the frying-pan into the fire, run from the yard-arm to the block, and escaped the open hostility of the man-of-war to lie at the mercy of the doubtful faith of our Albanian merchant.

From many circumstances, it chanced we were safer than we could have dared to hope. The town of Albany was at that time much concerned in contraband trade across the desert with the Indians and the French. This, as it was highly illegal, relaxed their loyalty, and as it brought them in relation with the politest people on the earth, divided even their sympathies. In short, they were like all the smugglers in the world, spies and agents ready-made for either party. Our Albanian, besides, was a very honest man indeed, and very greedy; and to crown our luck, he conceived a great delight in our society. Before we had reached the town of New York we had come to a full agreement; that he should carry us as far as Albany upon his ship, and thence put us on a way to pass the boundaries and join the French. For all this we were to pay at a high rate; but beggars can not be choosers, nor outlaws bargainers.

We sailed, then, up the Hudson River which, I protest, is a very fine stream, and put up at the King's Arms in Albany. The town was full of the militia of the province, breathing slaughter against the French. Governor Clinton was there himself, a very busy man, and, by what I could learn, very near distracted by the factiousness of his Assembly. The Indians on both sides were on the warpath; we saw parties of them bringing in prisoners and (what was much worse) scalps, both male and female, for which they were paid at a fixed rate; and I assure you the sight was not encouraging. Altogether we could scarce have come at a period more unsuitable for our designs; our position in the chief inn was dreadfully conspicuous; our Albanian fubbed us off with a thousand delays and seemed upon the point of a retreat from his engagements; nothing but peril appeared to environ the poor fugitives; and for some time we drowned our concern in a very irregular course of living.

This too proved to be fortunate; and it's one of the remarks that fall to be made upon our escape, how providentially our steps were conducted to the very end. What a humiliation to the dignity of man! My philosophy, the extraordinary genius of Ballantrae, our valor, in which I grant that we were equal—all these might have proved insufficient without the Divine blessing on our efforts. And how true it is, as the church tells us, that the truths of religion are after all quite applicable even to daily affairs! At least it was in the course of our revelry that we made the acquaintance of a spirited youth by the name of Chew. He was one of the most daring of the Indian traders, very well acquainted with the secret paths of the wilderness, needy, dissolute, and by a last good fortune, in some disgrace with his family. Him we persuaded to come to our relief; he privately provided what was needful for our flight; and one day we slipped out of Albany, without a word to our former friend, and embarked, a little above, in a canoe.

To the toils and perils of this journey, it would require a pen more elegant than mine to do full justice. The reader must conceive for himself the dreadful wilderness which we had now to thread; its thickets, swamps, precipitous rocks, impetuous rivers, and amazing waterfalls. Among these barbarous scenes we must toil all day, now paddling, now carrying our canoe upon our shoulders; and at night we slept about a fire, surrounded by the howling of wolves and other savage animals. It was our design to mount the head-waters of the Hudson, to the neighborhood of Crown Point, where the French had a strong place in the woods, upon Lake Champlain. But to have done this directly was too perilous; and it was accordingly gone upon by such a labyrinth of rivers, lakes, and portages as makes my head giddy to remember. These paths were in ordinary times entirely desert; but the country was now up, the tribes on the war-path, the woods full of Indian scouts. Again and again we came upon these parties, when we least expected them; and one day, in particular, I shall never forget; how, as dawn was coming in, we were suddenly surrounded by five or six of these painted devils uttering a very dreary sort of cry and brandishing their hatchets. It passed off harmlessly indeed, as did the rest of our encounters; for Chew was well known and highly valued among the different tribes. Indeed, he was a very gallant, respectable young man. But even with the advantage of his companionship, you must not think these meetings were without sensible peril. To prove friendship on our part, it was needful to draw upon our stock of rum—indeed, under whatever disguise, that is the true business of the Indian trader, to keep a traveling public house in the forest; and when once the braves had got their bottle of *scaura* (as they call this beastly liquor) it behooved us to set forth and paddle for our scalps. Once they were a little drunk, good-by to any sense or decency; they had but the one thought, to get more *scaura;* they might easily take it in their heads to give us chase; and had we been overtaken I had never written these memoirs.

We were come to the most critical portion of our course, where we might equally expect to fall into the hands of French or English, when a terrible calamity befell us. Chew was taken suddenly sick with symptoms like those of poison, and in the course of a few hours expired in the bottom of the canoe. We thus lost at once our guide, our interpreter, our boatman and our passport, for he was all these in one; and found ourselves reduced, at a blow, to the most desperate and irremediable distress. Chew, who took a great pride in his knowledge, had indeed often lectured us on the geography; and Ballantrae, I believe, would listen. But for my part I have always found such information highly tedious; and beyond the fact that we were now in the country of the Adirondack Indians, and not so distant from our destination, could we but have found the way, I was entirely ignorant. The wisdom of my course was soon the more apparent; for with all his pains, Ballantrae was no further advanced than myself. He knew we must continue to go up one stream; then, by way of a portage, down another; and then up a third. But you are to consider, in a mountain country, how many streams come rolling in from every hand. And how is a gentleman, who is a perfect stranger in that part of the world, to tell any one of them from any other? Nor was this our only trouble. We were great novices, besides, in handling a canoe; the portages were almost beyond our strength, so that I have seen us sit down in despair for half an hour at a time without one word; and the appearance of a single Indian, since we had now no means of speaking to them, would have been in all probability the means of our destruction. There is altogether some excuse if Ballantrae showed something of a glooming disposition; his habit of imputing blame to others, quite as capable as himself, was less tolerable, and his language it was not always easy to accept. Indeed, he had contracted on board the pirate ship a manner of address which was in a high degree unusual between gentlemen; and now, when you might say he was in a fever, it increased upon him hugely.

The third day of these wanderings, as we were carrying the canoe upon a rocky portage, she fell and was entirely bilged. The portage was between two lakes, both pretty extensive; the track, such as it was, opened at both ends upon the water, and on both hands was enclosed by the unbroken woods; and the sides of the lakes were quite impassable with bog; so that we beheld ourselves not only condemned to go without our boat and the greater part of our provisions, but to plunge at once into impenetrable thickets and to desert what little guidance we still had—the course of the river. Each stuck his pistols in his belt, shouldered an ax, made a pack of his treasure and as much food as he could stagger under, and deserting the rest of our possessions, even to our swords, which would have much embarrassed us among the woods, we set forth on this deplorable adventure. The labors of Hercules, so finely described by Homer, were a trifle to what we now underwent. Some parts of the forest were perfectly dense down to the ground, so that we must cut our way like mites in a cheese. In some the bottom was full of deep swamp, and the whole wood entirely rotten. I have leaped on a great fallen log and sunk to the knees in touchwood; I have sought to stay myself, in falling, against what looked to be a solid trunk, and the whole thing has whiffed away at my touch like a sheet of paper. Stumbling, falling, bogging to the knees, hewing our way, our eyes almost put out with twigs and branches, our clothes plucked from our bodies, we labored all day, and it is doubtful if we made two miles. What was worse, as we could rarely get a view of the country and were perpetually jostled from our path by obstacles, it was impossible even to have a guess in what direction we were moving.

A little before sundown, in an open place with a stream and set about with barbarous mountains, Ballantrae threw down his pack. "I will go no further," said he, and bade me light the fire, damning my blood in terms not proper for a chairman.

I told him to try to forget he had ever been a pirate, and to remember he had been a gentleman.

"Are you mad?" he cried. "Don't cross me here!" And then, shaking his fist at the hills, "To think," cries he, "that I must leave my bones in this miserable wilderness! Would God I had died upon the scaffold like a gentleman!" This he said ranting like an actor; and then sat biting his fingers and staring on the ground, a most unchristian object.

I took a certain horror of the man, for I thought a soldier and a gentleman should confront his end with more philosophy. I made him no reply, therefore, in words; and presently the evening fell so chill that I was glad, for my own sake, to kindle a fire. And yet God knows, in such an open spot, and the country alive with savages, the act was little short of lunacy. Ballantrae seemed never to observe me, but at last, as I was about parching a little corn, he looked up.

"Have you ever a brother?" said he.

"By the blessing of Heaven," said I, "not less than five."

"I have the one," said he, with a strange voice; and then presently, "He shall pay me for all this," he added. And when I asked him what was his brother's part in our distress, "What!" he cried, "he sits in my place, he bears my name, he courts my wife; and I am here alone with a damned Irishman in this tooth-chattering desert! Oh, I have been a common gull!" he cried.

The explosion was in all ways so foreign to my friend's nature that I was daunted out of all my just susceptibility. Sure, an offensive expression, however vivacious, appears a wonderfully small affair in circumstances so extreme! But here there is a strange thing to be noted. He had only once before referred to the lady with whom he was contracted. That was when he came in view of the town of New York, when he had told me, if all had their rights, he was now in sight of his own property, for Miss Graeme enjoyed a large estate in the province. And this was certainly a natural occasion; but now here she was named a second time; and what is surely fit to be observed, in this very month, which was November, '47, and *I believe upon that very day, as we sat among those barbarous mountains,* his brother and Miss Graeme were married. I am the least superstitious of men; but the hand of Providence is here displayed too openly not to be remarked.[3]

The next day, and the next, were passed in similar labors; Ballantrae often deciding on our course by the spinning of a coin; and once, when I expostulated on this childishness, he had an odd remark that I have never forgotten. "I know no better way," he said, "to express my scorn of human reason." I think it was the third day that we found the body of a Christian, scalped and most abominably mangled, and lying in a pudder of his blood, the birds of the desert screaming over him, as thick as flies. I can not describe how dreadfully this sight affected us; but it robbed me of all strength and all hope for this world. The same day, and only a little after, we were scrambling over a part of the forest that had been burned, when Ballantrae, who was a little ahead, ducked suddenly behind a fallen trunk. I joined him in this shelter, whence we could look abroad without being seen ourselves; and in the bottom of the next vale beheld a large war party of the savages going by across our line. There might be the value of a weak battalion present; all naked to the waist, blacked with grease and suet, and painted with white lead and vermilion, according to their beastly habits. They went one behind another like a string of geese, and at a quickish trot; so that they took but a little while to rattle by and disappear again among the woods. Yet I suppose we endured a greater agony of hesitation and suspense in these few minutes than goes usually to a man's whole life. Whether they were French or English Indians, whether they desired scalps or prisoners, whether we should declare ourselves upon the chance or lie quiet and continue the heart-breaking business of our journey: sure, I think, these were questions to have puzzled the brains of Aristotle himself. Ballantrae turned to me with a face all wrinkled up and his teeth showing in his mouth, like that I have read of people starving; he said no word, but his whole appearance was a kind of dreadful question.

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[3] *Note by Mr. Mackellar.*—A complete blunder: there was at this date no word of the marriage: see above in my own narration.

"They may be of the English side," I whispered; "and think! the best we could then hope, is to begin this over again."

"I know, I know," he said. "Yet it must come to a plunge at last." And he suddenly plucked out his coin, shook it in his closed hands, looked at it, and then lay down with his face in the dust.

Addition by Mr. Mackellar.—I drop the chevalier's narration at this point because the couple quarreled and separated the same day; and the chevalier's account of the quarrel seems to me (I must confess) quite incompatible with the nature of either of the men. Henceforth, they wandered alone, undergoing extraordinary sufferings; until first one and then the other was picked up by a party from Fort St. Frederick. Only two things are to be noted. And first (as most important for my purpose) that the Master in the course of his miseries buried his treasure, at a point never since discovered, but of which he took a drawing in his own blood on the lining of his hat. And second, that on his coming thus penniless to the fort, he was welcomed like a brother by the chevalier, who thence paid his way to France. The simplicity of Mr. Burke's character leads him at this point to praise the Master exceedingly; to an eye more worldly wise, it would seem it was the chevalier alone that was to be commended. I have the more pleasure in pointing to this really very noble trait of my esteemed correspondent, as I fear I may have wounded him immediately before. I have refrained from comments on any of his extraordinary and (in my eyes) immoral opinions, for I know him to be jealous of respect. But his version of the quarrel is really more than I can reproduce; for I knew the Master myself, and a man more insusceptible of fear is not conceivable. I regret this oversight of the chevalier's, and all the more because the tenor of his narrative (set aside a few flourishes) strikes me as highly ingenuous.

PERSECUTIONS ENDURED BY MR. HENRY

YOU can guess on what part of his adventures the colonel principally dwelt. Indeed, if we had heard it all, it is to be thought the current of this business had been wholly altered; but the pirate ship was very gently touched upon. Nor did I hear the colonel to an end even of that which he was willing to disclose; for Mr. Henry, having for some while been plunged in a brown study, rose at last from his seat and (reminding the colonel there were matters that he must attend to) bade me follow him immediately to the office.

Once there, he sought no longer to dissemble his concern, walking to and fro in the room with a contorted face, and passing his hand repeatedly upon his brow.

"We have some business," he began at last; and there broke off, declared we must have wine, and sent for a magnum of the best. This was extremely foreign to his habitudes; and what was still more so, when the wine had come he gulped down one glass upon another like a man careless of appearances. But the drink steadied him.

"You will scarce be surprised, Mackellar," says he, "when I tell you that my brother (whose safety we are all rejoiced to learn) stands in some need of money."

I told him I had misdoubted as much; but the time was not very fortunate as the stock was low.

"Not mine," said he. "There is the money for the mortgage."

I reminded him it was Mrs. Henry's.

"I will be answerable to my wife," he cried violently.

"And then," said I, "there is the mortgage."

"I know," said he, "it is on that I would consult you."

I showed him how unfortunate a time it was to divert this money from its destination; and how by so doing we must lose the profit of our past economies, and plunge back the estate into the mire. I even took the liberty to plead with him; and when he still opposed me with a shake of the head and a bitter, dogged smile, my zeal quite carried me beyond my place. "This is midsummer madness," cried I; "and I for one will be no party to it."

"You speak as though I did it for my pleasure," says he. "But I have a child now; and besides I love order; and to say the honest truth, Mackellar, I had begun to take a pride in the estates." He gloomed for a moment. "But what would you have?" he went on. "Nothing is mine, nothing. This day's news has knocked the bottom out of my life. I have only the name and the shadow of things; only the shadow; there is no substance in my rights."

"They will prove substantial enough before a court," said I.

He looked at me with a burning eye, and seemed to repress the word upon his lips; and I repented what I had said, for I saw that while he spoke of the estate he had still a side-thought to his marriage. And then, of a sudden, he twitched the letter from his pocket, where it lay all crumpled, smoothed it violently on the table, and read these words to me with a trembling tongue. " 'My dear Jacob'—this is how he begins!" cries he—" 'My dear Jacob, I once called you so, you may remember; and you have now done the business, and flung my heels as high as Criffel.' What do you think of that, Mackellar," says he, from an only brother? I declare to God I liked him very well; I was always stanch to him; and this is how he writes! But I will not sit down under the imputation"—(walking to and fro)—"I am as good as he, I am a better man than he, I call on God to prove it! I can not give him all the monstrous sum he asks; he knows the estate to be incompetent; but I will give him what I have, and it is more than he expects. I have borne all this too long. See what he writes further on; read it for yourself: 'I know you are a niggardly dog!' A niggardly dog! I, niggardly? Is that true, Mackellar? You think it is?" I really thought he would have struck me at that. "Oh, you all think so! Well, you shall see, and he shall see, and God shall see.

We beheld ourselves not only condemned to go without our boat and the greater part of our provisions, but to plunge at once into impenetrable thickets.

—*The Master of Ballantrae*, p. 59

If I ruin the estate and go barefoot, I shall stuff this bloodsucker. Let him ask all—all, and he shall have it! It is all his by rights. Ah!" he cried, "and I foresaw all this and worse, when he would not let me go." He poured out another glass of wine and was about to carry it to his lips, when I made so bold as lay a finger on his arm. He stopped a moment. "You are right," said he, and flung glass and all in the fireplace. "Come, let us count the money."

I durst no longer oppose him; indeed, I was very much affected by the sight of so much disorder in a man usually so controlled; and we sat down together, counted the money, and made it up in packets for the greater ease of Colonel Burke, who was to be the bearer. This done, Mr. Henry returned to the hall, where he and my old lord sat all night through with their guest.

A little before dawn I was called and set out with the colonel. He would scarce have liked a less responsible convoy, for he was a man who valued himself; nor could we afford him one more dignified, for Mr. Henry must not appear with the free-traders. It was a very bitter morning of wind, and as we went down through the long shrubbery the colonel held himself muffled in his cloak.

"Sir," said I, "this is a great sum of money that your friend requires. I must suppose his necessities to be very great."

"We must suppose so," says he, I thought dryly, but perhaps it was the cloak about his mouth.

"I am only a servant of the family," said I. "You may deal openly with me. I think we are likely to get little good by him?"

"My dear man," said the colonel, "Ballantrae is a gentleman of the most eminent natural abilities, and a man that I admire and that I revere, to the very ground he treads on." And then he seemed to me to pause like one in a difficulty.

"But for all that," said I, "we are likely to get little good by him?"

"Sure, and you can have it your own way, my dear man," says the colonel.

By this time we had come to the side of the creek, where the boat awaited him. "Well," said he, "I am sure I am very much your debtor for all your civility, Mr. Whatever-your-name-is; and just as a last word, and since you show so much intelligent interest, I will mention a small circumstance that may be of use to the family. For I believe my friend omitted to mention that he has the largest pension on the Scots Fund of any refugee in Paris; and it's the more disgraceful, sir," cries the colonel, warming, "because there's not one dirty penny for myself."

He cocked his hat at me, as if I had been to blame for this partiality; then changed again into his usual swaggering civility, shook me by the hand, and set off down to the boat, with the money under his arms, and whistling as he went the pathetic air of "Shule Aroon." It was the first time I had heard that tune; I was to hear it again, words and all, as you shall learn; but I remember how that little stave of it ran in my head, after the free-traders had bade him "Wheesht, in the deil's name," and the grating of the oars had taken its place, and I stood and watched the dawn creeping on the sea, and the boat drawing away, and the lugger lying with her foresail backed awaiting it.

The gap made in our money was a sore embarrassment; and among other consequences, it had this: that I must ride to Edinburgh, and there raise a new loan on very questionable terms to keep the old afloat; and was thus, for close upon three weeks, absent from the house of Durrisdeer.

What passed in the interval, I had none to tell me; but I found Mrs. Henry, upon my return, much changed in her demeanor; the old talks with my lord for the most part pretermitted; a certain depreciation visible toward her husband, to whom I thought she addressed herself more often; and for one thing, she was now greatly wrapped up in Miss Katharine. You would think the change was agreeable to Mr. Henry! no such matter! To the contrary, every circumstance of alteration was a stab to him; he read in each the avowal of her truant fancies: that constancy to the Master of which she was proud while she supposed him dead, she had to blush for now she knew he was alive: and these blushes were the hated spring of her new conduct. I am to conceal no truth; and I will here say plainly, I think this was the period in which Mr. Henry showed the worst. He contained himself, indeed, in public; but there was a deep-seated irritation visible underneath. With me, from whom he had less concealment, he was often grossly unjust; and even for his wife he would sometimes have a sharp retort: perhaps when she had ruffled him with some unwonted kindness; perhaps upon no tangible occasion, the mere habitual tenor of the man's annoyance bursting spontaneously forth. When he would thus forget himself (a thing so strangely out of keeping with the terms of their relation), there went a shock through the whole company; and the pair would look upon each other in a kind of pained amazement.

All the time too, while he was injuring himself by this defect of temper, he was hurting his position by a silence, of which I scarce know whether to say it was the child of generosity or pride. The free-traders came again and again, bringing messengers from the Master, and none departed empty-handed. I never durst reason with Mr. Henry; he gave what was asked of him in a kind of noble rage. Perhaps because he knew he was by nature inclining to the parsimonious, he took a back-foremost pleasure in the recklessness with which he supplied his brother's exigence. Perhaps the falsity of the position would have spurred an humbler man into the same excesses. But the estate (if I may say so) groaned under it; our daily expenses were shorn lower and lower; the stables were emptied, all but four roadsters; servants were discharged, which raised a dreadful murmuring in the country and heated up the old disfavor upon Mr. Henry; and at last the yearly visit to Edinburgh must be discontinued.

This was in 1756. You are to suppose that for seven years this bloodsucker had been drawing the life's blood from Durrisdeer; and that all this time my patron had held his peace. It was an effect of devilish malice in the Master, that he addressed Mr. Henry alone upon the matter of his demands, and there was never a word to my lord. The family had looked on wondering at our economies. They had lamented, I have no doubt, that my patron had become so great a miser; a fault always despicable, but in the young abhorrent; and Mr. Henry was not yet thirty years of age. Still he had managed the business of Durrisdeer almost from a boy; and they bore with these changes in a silence as proud and bitter as his own, until the coping stone of the Edinburgh visit.

At this time, I believe my patron and his wife were rarely together save at meals. Immediately on the back of Colonel Burke's announcement, Mrs. Henry made palpable advances; you might say she had laid a sort of timid court to her husband, different indeed from her former manner of unconcern and distance. I never had the heart to blame Mr. Henry because he recoiled from these advances; nor yet to censure the wife, when she was cut to the quick by their rejection. But the result was an entire estrangement, so that (as I say) they rarely spoke except at meals. Even the matter of the Edinburgh visit was first broached at table; and it chanced that Mrs. Henry was that day ailing and querulous. She had no sooner understood her husband's meaning than the red flew in her face.

"At last," she cried, "this is too much! Heaven knows what pleasure I have in my life, that I should be denied my only consolation. These shameful proclivities must be trod down! we are already a mark and an eyesore in the neighborhood; I will not endure this fresh insanity."

"I can not afford it," says Mr. Henry.

"Afford?" she cried. "For shame! But I have money of my own."

"That is all mine, madam, by marriage," he snarled, and instantly left the room.

My old lord threw up his hands to heaven and he and his daughter, withdrawing to the chimney, gave me a broad hint to be gone. I found Mr. Henry in his usual retreat, the steward's room, perched on the end of the table and plunging his penknife in it, with a very ugly countenance.

"Mr. Henry," said I, "you do yourself too much injustice; and it is time this should cease."

"Oh!" cries he, "nobody minds here. They think it only natural. I have shameful proclivities. I am a niggardly dog," and he drove his knife up to the hilt. "But I will show that fellow," he cried, with an oath, "I will show him which is the more generous."

"This is no generosity," said I, "this is only pride."

"Do you think I want morality?" he asked.

I thought he wanted help, and I should give it him, willingly; and no sooner was Mrs. Henry gone to her room than I presented myself at her door and sought admittance.

She openly showed her wonder. "What do you want with me, Mr. Mackellar?" said she.

"The Lord knows, madam," says I, "I have never troubled you before with any freedoms, but this thing lies too hard upon my conscience, and it will out. Is it possible that two people can be so blind as you and my lord? and have lived all these years with a noble gentleman like Mr. Henry, and understand so little of his nature?"

"What does this mean?" she cried.

"Do you not know where his money goes to? his—and yours—and the money for the very wine he does not drink at table?" I went on. "To Paris—to that man! Eight thousand pounds has he had of us in seven years, and my patron fool enough to keep it secret!"

"Eight thousand pounds!" she repeated. "It is impossible, the estate is not sufficient."

"God knows how we have sweated farthings to produce it," said I. "But eight thousand and sixty is the sum, beside odd shillings. And if you can think my patron miserly after that, this shall be my last interference."

"You need say no more, Mr. Mackellar," said she. "You have done most properly in what you too modestly call your interference. I am much to blame; you must think me indeed a very unobservant wife"—(looking upon me with a strange smile)—"but I shall put this right at once. The Master was always of a very thoughtless nature; but his heart is excellent; he is the soul of generosity. I shall write to him myself. You can not think how you have pained me by this communication."

"Indeed, madam, I had hoped to have pleased you," said I, for I raged to see her still thinking of the Master.

"And pleased," said she, "and pleased me, of course."

That same day (I will not say but that I watched) I had the satisfaction to see Mr. Henry come from his wife's room in a state most unlike himself; for his face was all bloated with weeping, and yet he seemed to me to walk upon the air. By this, I was sure his wife had made him full amends for once. "Ah," thought I, to myself, "I have done a brave stroke this day."

On the morrow, as I was seated at my books, Mr. Henry came in softly behind me, took me by the shoulders and shook me in a manner of playfulness. "I find you are a faithless fellow after all," says he; which was his only reference to my part, but the tone he spoke in was more to me than any eloquence of protestation. Nor was this all I had effected; for when the next messenger came (as he did not long afterward) from the Master, he got nothing away with him but a letter. For some while back it had been I myself who had conducted these affairs; Mr. Henry not setting pen to paper, and I only in the driest and most formal terms. But this letter I did not even see; it would scarce be pleasant reading, for Mr. Henry felt he had his wife behind him for once, and I observed, on the day it was despatched, he had a very gratified expression.

Things went better now in the family, though it could scarce be pretended they went well. There was now at least no misconception; there was kindness upon all sides; and I believe my patron and his wife might again have drawn together, if he could but have pocketed his pride, and she forgot (what was the ground of all) her brooding on another man. It is wonderful how a private thought leaks out; it is wonderful to me now, how we should all have followed the current of her sentiments; and though she bore herself quietly, and had a very even disposition, yet we should have known whenever her fancy ran to Paris. And would not any one have thought that my disclosure must have rooted up that idol? I think there is the devil in women: all these years passed, never a sight of the man, little enough kindness to remember (by all accounts) even while she had him, the notion of his death intervening, his heartless rapacity laid bare to her: that all should not do, and she must still keep the best place in her heart for this accursed fellow, is a thing to make a plain man rage. I had never much natural sympathy for the passion of love; but this unreason in my patron's wife disgusted me outright with the whole matter. I remember checking a maid, because she sung some bairnly kickshaw while my mind was thus engaged; and my asperity brought about my ears the enmity of all the petticoats about the house; of which I recked very little, but it amused Mr. Henry, who rallied me much upon our joint unpopularity. It is strange enough (for my own mother was certainly one of the salt of the earth and my aunt Dickson, who paid my fees at the university, a very notable woman), but I have never had much toleration for the female sex, possibly not much understanding; and being far from a bold man, I have ever shunned their company. Not only do I see no cause to regret this diffidence in myself, but have invariably remarked the most unhappy consequences follow those who were less wise. So much I thought proper to set down, lest I show myself unjust to Mrs. Henry. And besides the remark arose naturally, on a reperusal of the letter which was the next step in these affairs, and reached me to my sincere astonishment by a private hand, some week or so after the departure of the last messenger.

Letter from Colonel Burke (*afterward Chevalier*) *to* Mr. Mackellar.

"Troyes in Champagne,
"*July* 12, 1756.

"My dear Sir: You will doubtless be surprised to receive a communication from one so little known to you; but on the occasion I had the good fortune to rencontre you at Durrisdeer, I remarked you for a young man of a solid gravity of character: of qualification which I profess I admire and revere next to natural genius or the bold, chivalrous spirit of the soldier. I was besides interested in the noble family which you have the honor to serve or (to speak more by the book) to be the humble and respected friend of; and a conversation I had the pleasure to have with you very early in the morning has remained much upon my mind.

"Being the other day in Paris, on a visit from this famous city where I am in garrison, I took occasion to inquire your name (which I profess I had forgot) at my friend, the Master of B——; and a fair opportunity occurring, I write to inform you of what's new.

"The Master of B—— (when we had last some talk of him together) was in receipt, as I think I then told you, of a highly advantageous pension on the Scots Fund. He next received a company, and was soon after advanced to a regiment of his own. My dear sir, I do not offer to explain this circumstance; any more than why I myself, who have rid at the right hand of princes, should be fubbed off with a pair of colors and sent to rot in a hole at the bottom of the province. Accustomed as I am to courts, I can not but feel it is no atmosphere for a plain soldier; and I could never hope to advance by similar means, even could I stoop to the endeavor. But our friend has a particular aptitude to succeed by the means of ladies; and if all be true that I have heard, he enjoyed a remarkable protection. It is like this turned against him; for when I had the honor to shake him by the hand, he was but newly released from the Bastille where he had been cast on a sealed letter; and though now released, has both lost his regiment and his pension. My dear sir, the loyalty of a plain Irishman will ultimately succeed in the place of craft; as I am sure a gentleman of your probity will agree.

"Now, sir, the Master is a man whose genius I admire beyond expression, and besides he is my friend; but I thought a little word of this revolution in his fortunes would not come amiss, for in my opinion the man's desperate. He spoke when I saw him of a trip to India (whither I am myself in some hope of accompanying my illustrious countryman, Mr. Lally; but for this he would require (as I understood) more money than was readily at his command. You may have heard a military proverb that it is a good thing to make a bridge of gold to a flying enemy? I trust you will take my meaning; and I subscribe myself, with proper respects to my Lord Durrisdeer, to his son, and to the beauteous Mrs. Durie,

"My dear sir,
"Your obedient humble servant,
"FRANCIS BURKE."

This missive I carried at once to Mr. Henry; and I think there was but the one thought between the two of us: that it had come a week too late. I made haste to send an answer to Colonel Burke, in which I begged him, if he should see the Master, to assure him his next messenger would be attended to. But with all my haste I was not in time to avert what was impending; the arrow had been drawn, it must now fly. I could almost doubt the power of Providence (and certainly His will) to stay the issue of events; and it is a strange thought, how many of us had been storing up the elements of this catastrophe, for how long a time, and with how blind an ignorance of what we did.

From the coming of the colonel's letter, I had a spyglass in my room, began to drop questions to the tenant folk, and as there was no great secrecy observed and the free trade (in our part) went by force as much as stealth, I had soon got together a knowledge of the signals in use, and knew pretty well to an hour when any messenger might be expected. I say I questioned the tenants; for with the traders themselves, desperate blades that went habitually armed, I could never bring myself to meddle willingly. Indeed, by what proved in the sequel an unhappy chance, I was an object of scorn to some of these braggadocios; who had not only gratified me with a nickname, but catching me one night upon a bypath and being all (as they would have said) somewhat merry, had caused me to dance for their diversion. The method was that of cruelly chipping at my toes with naked cutlasses, shouting at the same time "Square-Toes"; and though they did me no bodily mischief, I was none the less deplorably affected and was indeed for several days confined to my bed: a scandal on the state of Scotland on which no comment is required.

It happened on the afternoon of November 7th, in this same unfortunate year, that I espied during my walk the smoke of a beacon fire upon the Muckleross. It was drawing near time for my return; but the uneasiness upon my spirits was that day so great that I must burst through the thickets to the edge of what they call the Craig Head. The sun was already down, but there was still a broad light in the west, which showed me some of the smugglers treading out their signal fire upon the Ross, and in the bay the lugger lying with her sails brailed up. She was plainly but new come to anchor, and yet the skiff was already lowered and pulling for the landing-place at the end of the long shrubbery. And this I knew could signify but one thing: the coming of a messenger for Durrisdeer.

I laid aside the remainder of my terrors, clambered down the brae—a place I had never ventured through before, and was hid among the shore-side thickets in time to see the boat touch. Captain Crail himself was steering, a thing not usual; by his side there sat a passenger; and the men gave way with difficulty, being hampered with near upon half a dozen portmanteaus, great and small. But the business of landing was briskly carried through; and presently the baggage was all tumbled on shore, the boat on its return voyage to the lugger, and the passenger standing alone upon the point of rock, a tall, slender figure of a gentleman, habited in black, with a sword by his side and a walking-cane upon his wrist. As he so stood, he waved the cane to Captain Crail by way of salutation, with something both of grace and mockery that wrote the gesture deeply on my mind.

No sooner was the boat away with my sworn enemies than I took a sort of half courage, came forth to the margin of the thicket, and there halted again, my mind being greatly pulled about between natural diffidence and a dark foreboding of the truth. Indeed, I might have stood there swithering all night, had not the stranger turned, spied me through the mists, which were beginning to fall, and waved and cried on me to draw near. I did so with a heart like lead.

"Here, my good man," said he, in the English accent, "here are some things for Durrisdeer."

I was now near enough to see him, a very handsome figure and countenance, swarthy, lean, long, with a quick, alert, black look, as of one who was a fighter and accustomed to command; upon one cheek he had a mole, not unbecoming; a large diamond sparkled on his hand; his clothes, although of the one hue, were of a French and foppish design; his ruffles, which he wore longer than common, of exquisite lace; and I wondered the more to see him in such a guise, when he was but newly landed from a dirty smuggling lugger. At the same time he had a better look at me, toised me a second time sharply, and then smiled.

"I wager, my friend," says he, "that I know both your name and your nickname. I divined these very clothes upon your hand of writing, Mr. Mackellar."

At these words I fell to shaking.

"Oh," says he, "you need not be afraid of me. I bear no malice for your tedious letters; and it is my purpose to employ you a good deal. You may call me Mr. Bally: it is the name I have assumed; or rather (since I am addressing so great a precisian) it is so I have curtailed my own. Come now, pick up that and that"—indicating two of the portmanteaus. "That will be as much as you are fit to bear, and the rest can very well wait. Come, lose no more time, if you please."

His tone was so cutting that I managed to do as he bade by a sort of instinct, my mind being all the time quite lost.

No sooner had I picked up the portmanteaus than he turned his back and marched all through the long shrubbery; where it began already to be dusk, for the wood is thick and ever green. I followed behind, loaded almost to the dust, though I profess I was not conscious of the burden; being swallowed up in the monstrosity of this return and my mind flying like a weaver's shuttle.

On a sudden I set the portmanteaus to the ground and halted. He turned and looked back at me.

"Well?" said he.

"You are the Master of Ballantrae?"

"You will do me the justice to observe," says he, "that I have made no secret with the astute Mackellar."

"And in the name of God," cries I, "what brings you here? Go back, while it is yet time."

"I thank you," said he. "Your master has chosen this way, and not I; but since he has made the choice, he (and you also) must abide by the result. And now pick up these things of mine, which you have set down in a very boggy place, and attend to that which I have made your business."

But I had no thought now of obedience; I came straight up to him. "If nothing will move you to go back," said I; "though sure, under all the circumstances, any Christian or even any gentleman would scruple to go forward—"

"These are gratifying expressions," he threw in.

"If nothing will move you to go back," I continued, "there are still some decencies to be observed. Wait here with your baggage, and I will go forward and prepare your family. Your father is an old man; and"—I stumbled—"there are decencies to be observed."

"Truly," said he, "this Mackellar improves upon acquaintance. But look you here, my man, and understand it once for all—you waste your breath upon me, and I go my own way with inevitable motion."

"Ah!" says I. "Is that so? We shall see then!"

And I turned and took to my heels for Durrisdeer. He clutched at me and cried out angrily, and then I believed I heard him laugh, and then I am certain he pursued me for a step or two, and (I suppose) desisted. One thing at least is sure, that I came but a few minutes later to the door of the great house, nearly strangled for the lack of breath, but quite alone. Straight up the stair I ran, and burst into the hall, and stopped before the family without the power of speech; but I must have carried my story in my looks, for they rose out of their places and stared on me like changelings.

"He has come," I panted at last.

"He?" said Mr. Henry.

"Himself," said I.

"My son?" cried my lord. "Imprudent, imprudent boy! Oh, could he not stay where he was safe?"

Never a word said Mrs. Henry; nor did I look at her, I scarcely knew why.

"Well," said Mr. Henry, with a very deep breath, "and where is he?"

"I left him in the long shrubbery," said I.

"Take me to him," said he.

So we went out together, he and I, without another word from any one; and in the midst of the graveled plot encountered the Master strolling up, whistling as he came and beating the air with his cane. There was still light enough overhead to recognize though not to read a countenance.

"Ah, Jacob!" says the Master. "So here is Esau back."

"James," says Mr. Henry, "for God's sake, call me by my name. I will not pretend that I am glad to see you; but I would fain make you as welcome as I can in the house of our fathers."

"Or in *my* house? or *yours?*" says the Master. "Which was you about to say? But this is an old sore, and we need not rub it. If you would not share with me in Paris, I hope you will yet scarce deny your elder brother a corner of the fire at Durrisdeer?"

"That is very idle speech," replied Mr. Henry. "And you understand the power of your position excellently well."

"Why, I believe I do," said the other, with a little laugh. And this, though they had never touched hands, was (as we may say) the end of the brothers' meeting; for at this the Master turned to me and bade me fetch his baggage.

I, on my side, turned to Mr. Henry for a confirmation; perhaps with some defiance.

"As long as the Master is here, Mr. Mackellar, you will very much oblige me by regarding his wishes as you would my own," says Mr. Henry. "We are constantly troubling you; will you be so good as send one of the servants?" with an accent on the word.

If this speech were anything at all, it was surely a well-deserved reproof upon the stranger; and yet, so devilish was his impudence, he twisted it the other way.

"And shall we be common enough to say 'Sneck up?' " inquires he softly, looking upon me sidewise.

Had a kingdom depended on the act, I could not have trusted myself in words; even to call a servant was beyond me; I had rather serve the man myself than speak; and I turned away in silence and went into the long shrubbery, with a heart full of anger and despair. It was dark under the trees, and I walked before me and forgot what business I was come upon, till I near broke my shin on the portmanteaus. Then it was that I remarked a strange particular; for whereas I had before carried both and scarce observed it, it was now as much as I could do to manage one. And this, as it forced me to make two journeys, kept me the longer from the hall.

When I got there the business of welcome was over long ago; the company was already at supper; and by an oversight that cut me to the quick, my place had been forgotten. I had seen one side of the Master's return; now I was to see the other. It was he who first remarked my coming in and standing back (as I did) in some annoyance. He jumped from his seat.

"And if I have not got the good Mackellar's place!" cries he. "John, lay another for Mr. Bally; I protest he will disturb no one, and your table is big enough for all."

I could scarce credit my ears, nor yet my senses, when he took me by the shoulders and thrust me laughing into my own place; such an affectionate playfulness was in his voice. And while John laid the fresh place for him (a thing on which he still insisted) he went and leaned on his father's chair and looked down upon him, and the old man turned about and looked upward on his son, with such a pleasant mutual tenderness that I could have carried my hand to my head in mere amazement.

Yet all was of a piece. Never a harsh word fell from him, never a sneer showed upon his lip. He had laid aside even his cutting English accent, and spoke with the kindly Scots tongue that sets a value on affectionate words; and though his manners had a graceful elegance mighty foreign to our ways in Durrisdeer, it was still a homely courtliness, that did not shame but flattered us. All that he did throughout the meal, indeed, drinking wine with me with a notable respect, turning about for a pleasant word with John, fondling his father's hand, breaking into little merry tales of his adventures, calling up the past with happy reference—all he did was so becoming, and himself so handsome, that I could scarce wonder if my lord and Mrs. Henry sat about the board with radiant faces, or if John waited behind with dropping tears.

As soon as supper was over, Mrs. Henry rose to withdraw.

"This was never your way, Alison," said he.

"It is my way now," she replied; which was notoriously false, "and I will give you a good night, James, and a welcome—from the dead," said she, and her voice drooped and trembled.

Poor Mr. Henry, who had made rather a heavy figure through the meal, was more concerned than ever; pleased to see his wife withdraw, and yet half displeased, as he thought upon the cause of it; and the next moment altogether dashed by the fervor of her speech.

On my part, I thought I was now one too many; and was stealing after Mrs. Henry, when the Master saw me.

"Now, Mr. Mackellar," says he, "I take this near on an unfriendliness. I can not have you go; this is to make a stranger of the prodigal son—and let me remind you where—in his own father's house! Come sit ye down, and drink another glass with Mr. Bally."

"Ay, ay, Mr. Mackellar," says my lord, "we must not make a stranger either of him or you. I have been telling my son," he added, his voice brightening as usual on the word, "how much we valued all your friendly service."

So I sat there silent till my usual hour; and might have been almost deceived in the man's nature, but for one passage in which his perfidy appeared too plain. Here was the passage; of which, after what he knows of the brothers' meeting, the reader shall consider for himself. Mr. Henry sitting somewhat dully, in spite of his best endeavors to carry things before my lord, up jumps the Master, passes about the board, and claps his brother on the shoulder.

"Come, come, *Hairry lad,*" says he, with a broad accent such as they must have used together when they were boys, "you must not be downcast because your brother has come home. All's yours, that's sure enough, and little I grudge it you. Neither must you grudge me my place beside my father's fire."

"And that is too true, Henry," says my old lord, with a little frown, a thing rare with him. "You have been the elder brother of the parable in the good sense; you must be careful of the other."

"I am easily put in the wrong," said Mr. Henry.

"Who puts you in the wrong?" cried my lord, I thought very tartly for so mild a man. "You have earned my gratitude and your brother's many thousand times; you may count on its endurance, and let that suffice."

"Ay, Harry, that you may," said the Master; and I thought Mr. Henry looked at him with a kind of wildness in his eye.

On all the miserable business that now followed, I have four questions that I asked myself often at the time and ask myself still. Was the man moved by a particular sentiment against Mr. Henry? or by what he thought to be his interest? or by a mere delight in cruelty such as cats display and theologians tell us of the devil? or by what he would have called love? My common opinion halts among the three first; but perhaps there lay at the spring of his behavior an element of all. As thus: Animosity to Mr. Henry would explain his hateful usage of him when they were alone; the interests he came to serve would explain his very different attitude before my lord; that and some spice of a design of gallantry, his care to stand well with Mrs. Henry; and the pleasure of malice for itself, the pains he was continually at to mingle and oppose these lines of conduct.

A tall, slender figure of a gentleman, habited in black.

—*The Master of Ballantrae, p.* 74

Partly because I was a very open friend to my patron, partly because in my letters to Paris I had often given myself some freedom of remonstrance, I was included in his diabolical amusement. When I was alone with him, he pursued me with sneers; before the family, he used me with the extreme of friendly condescension. This was not only painful in itself, not only did it put me continually in the wrong; but there was in it an element of insult indescribable. That he should thus leave me out in his dissimulation, as though even my testimony were too despicable to be considered, galled me to the blood. But what it was to me is not worth notice. I make but memorandum of it here; and chiefly for this reason, that it had one good result, and gave me the quicker sense of Mr. Henry's martyrdom.

It was on him the burden fell. How was he to respond to the public advances of one who never lost a chance of gibing him in private? How was he to smile back on the deceiver and the insulter? He was condemned to seem ungracious. He was condemned to silence. Had he been less proud, had he spoken, who would have credited the truth? The acted calumny had done its work; my lord and Mrs. Henry were the daily witnesses of what went on; they could have sworn in court that the Master was a model of long-suffering good-nature and Mr. Henry a pattern of jealousy and thanklessness. And ugly enough as these must have appeared in any one, they seemed tenfold uglier in Mr. Henry; for who could forget that the Master lay in peril of his life, and that he had already lost his mistress, his title and his fortune?

"Henry, will you ride with me?" asks the Master one day.

And Mr. Henry, who had been goaded by the man all morning, raps out: "I will not."

"I sometimes wish you would be kinder, Henry," says the other wistfully.

I give this for a specimen; but scenes befell continually. Small wonder if Mr. Henry was blamed; small wonder if I fretted myself into something near upon a bilious fever; nay, and at the mere recollection feel a bitterness in my blood.

Sure, never in this world was a more diabolical contrivance; so perfidious, so simple, so impossible to combat. And yet I think again, and I think always, Mrs. Henry might have read between the lines; she might have had more knowledge of her husband's nature; after all these years of marriage, she might have commanded or captured his confidence. And my old lord too, that very watchful gentleman, where was all his observation? But for one thing, the deceit was practised by a master hand, and might have gulled an angel. For another (in the case of Mrs. Henry), I have observed there are no persons so far away as those who are both married and estranged, so that they seem out of earshot or to have no common tongue. For a third (in the case of both of these spectators), they were blinded by old, ingrained predilection. And for a fourth, the risk the Master was supposed to stand in (supposed, I say—you will soon hear why) made it seem the more ungenerous to criticize; and keeping them in a perpetual tender solicitude about his life, blinded them the more effectually to his faults.

It was during this time that I perceived most clearly the effect of manner, and was led to lament most deeply the plainness of my own. Mr. Henry had the essence of a gentleman; when he was moved, when there was any call of circumstance, he could play his part with dignity and spirit; but in the day's commerce (it is idle to deny it) he fell short of the ornamental. The Master (on the other hand) had never a movement but it commended him. So it befell that when the one appeared gracious and the other ungracious, every trick of their bodies seemed to call out confirmation. Nor that alone; but the more deeply Mr. Henry floundered in his brother's toils, the more clownish he grew; and the more the Master enjoyed his spiteful entertainment, the more engagingly, the more smilingly, he went! So that the plot, by its own scope and progress, furthered and confirmed itself.

It was one of the man's arts to use the peril in which, as I say, he was supposed to stand. He spoke of it to those who loved him with a gentle pleasantry, which made it the more touching. To Mr. Henry, he used it as a cruel weapon of offense. I remember his laying his finger on the clean lozenge of the painted window, one day when we three were alone together in the hall. "Here went your lucky guinea, Jacob," said he. And when Mr. Henry only looked upon him darkly, "Oh," he added, "you need not look such impotent malice, my good fly. You can be rid of your spider when you please. How long, oh, Lord? When are you to be wrought to the point of a denunciation, scrupulous brother? It is one of my interests in this dreary hole. I ever loved experiment." Still Mr. Henry only stared upon him with a glooming brow and a changed color; and at last the Master broke out in a laugh and clapped him on the shoulder, calling him a sulky dog. At this my patron leaped back with a gesture I thought very dangerous; and I must suppose the Master thought so too; for he looked the least in the world discountenanced, and I do not remember him again to have laid hands on Mr. Henry.

But though he had his peril always on his lips in the one way or the other, I thought his conduct strangely incautious, and began to fancy the government (who had set a price upon his head) was gone sound asleep. I will not deny I was tempted with the wish to denounce him; but two thoughts withheld me: one that if he were thus to end his life upon an honorable scaffold, the man would be canonized for good in the minds of his father and my patron's wife; the other, that if I was any way mingled in the matter, Mr. Henry himself would scarce escape some glancings of suspicion. And in the mean while our enemy went in and out more than I could have thought possible, the fact that he was home again was buzzed about all the country-side; and yet he was never stirred. Of all these so many and so different persons who were acquainted with his presence, none had the least greed (as I used to say, in my annoyance) or the least loyalty; and the man rode here and there—fully more welcome, considering the lees of old unpopularity, than Mr. Henry—and considering the free-traders, far safer than myself.

Not but what he had a trouble of his own; and this, as it brought about the gravest consequences, I must now relate. The reader will scarce have forgotten Jessie Broun; her way of life was much among the smuggling party; Captain Crail himself was of her intimates; and she had early word of Mr. Bally's presence at the house. In my opinion she had long ceased to care two straws for the Master's person; but it was become her habit to connect herself continually with the Master's name; that was the ground of all her play-acting; and so, now when he was back, she thought she owed it to herself to grow a haunter of the neighborhood of Durrisdeer. The Master could scarce go abroad but she was there in wait for him; a scandalous figure of a woman, not often sober; hailing him wildly as "her bonnie laddie," quoting pedler's poetry, and as I receive the story, even seeking to weep upon his neck. I own I rubbed my hands over this persecution; but the Master, who laid so much upon others, was himself the least patient of men. There were strange scenes enacted in the policies. Some say he took his cane to her, and Jessie fell back upon her former weapon, stones. It is certain at least that he made a motion to Captain Crail to have the woman trepanned, and that the captain refused the proposition with uncommon vehemence. And the end of the matter was victory for Jessie. Money was got together; an interview took place in which my proud gentleman must consent to be kissed and wept upon; and the woman was set up in a public of her own, somewhere on Solway side (but I forget where) and by the only news I ever had of it, extremely ill-frequented.

This is to look forward. After Jessie had been but a little while upon his heels, the Master comes to me one day in the steward's office, and with more civility than usual, "Mackellar," says he, "there is a damned crazy wench comes about here. I can not well move in the matter myself, which brings me to you. Be so good as see to it; the men must have a strict injunction to drive the wench away."

"Sir," said I, trembling a little, "you can do your own dirty errands for yourself."

He said not a word to that, and left the room.

Presently came Mr. Henry. "Here is news!" cried he.

"It seems all is not enough, and you must add to my wretchedness. It seems you have insulted Mr. Bally."

"Under your kind favor, Mr. Henry," said I, "it was he that insulted me, and as I think grossly. But I may have been careless of your position when I spoke; and if you think so when you know all, my dear patron, you have but to say the word. For you I would obey in any point whatever, even to sin, God pardon me!" And thereupon I told him what had passed.

Mr. Henry smiled to himself; a grimmer smile I never witnessed. "You did exactly well," said he. "He shall drink his Jessie Broun to the dregs." And then, spying the Master outside, he opened the window, and crying to him by the name of Mr. Bally, asked him to step up and have a word.

"James," said he, when our persecutor had come in and closed the door behind him, looking at me with a smile as if he thought I was to be humbled, "you brought me a complaint against Mr. Mackellar into which I have inquired. I need not tell you I would always take his word against yours; for we are alone, and I am going to use something of your own freedom. Mr. Mackellar is a gentleman I value; and you must contrive, so long as you are under this roof, to bring yourself into no more collisions with one whom I will support at any possible cost to me or mine. As for the errand upon which you came to him, you must deliver yourself from the consequences of your own cruelty, and none of my servants shall be at all employed in such a case."

"My father's servants, I believe," says the Master.

"Go to him with this tale," said Mr. Henry.

The Master grew very white. He pointed at me with his finger. "I want that man discharged," he said.

"He shall not be," said Mr. Henry.

"You shall pay pretty dear for this," says the Master.

"I have paid so dear already for a wicked brother," said Mr. Henry, "that I am bankrupt even of fears. You have no place left where you can strike me."

"I will show you about that," says the Master, and went softly away.

"What will he do next, Mackellar?" cries Mr. Henry.

"Let me go away," said I. "My dear patron, let me go away; I am but the beginning of fresh sorrows."

"Would you leave me quite alone?" said he.

We were not long in suspense as to the nature of the new assault. Up to that hour the Master had played a very close game with Mrs. Henry; avoiding pointedly to be alone with her, which I took at the time for an effect of decency, but now think to be a most insidious art; meeting her, you may say, at meal time only; and behaving, when he did so, like an affectionate brother. Up to that hour, you may say he had scarce directly interfered between Mr. Henry and his wife; except in so far as he had maneuvered the one quite forth from the good graces of the other. Now all that was to be changed; but whether really in revenge, or because he was wearying of Durrisdeer and looked about for some diversion, who but the devil shall decide?

From that hour at least began the siege of Mrs. Henry; a thing so deftly carried on that I scarce know if she was aware of it herself, and that her husband must look on in silence. The first parallel was opened (as was made to appear) by accident. The talk fell, as it did often, on the exiles in France; so it glided to the matter of their songs.

"There is one," says the Master, "if you are curious in these matters, that has always seemed to me very moving. The poetry is harsh; and yet, perhaps because of my situation, it has always found the way to my heart. It is supposed to be sung, I should tell you, by an exile's sweetheart; and represents, perhaps, not so much the truth of what she is thinking, as the truth of what he hopes of her, poor soul! in these far lands." And here the Master sighed. "I protest it is a pathetic sight when a score of rough Irish, all common sentinels, get to this song; and you may see by their falling tears, how it strikes home to them. It goes thus, father," says he, very adroitly taking my lord for his listener, "and if I can not get to the end of it, you must think it is a common case with us exiles." And thereupon he struck up the same air as I had heard the colonel whistle; but now to words, rustic indeed, yet most pathetically setting forth a poor girl's aspirations for an exiled lover: of which one verse indeed (or something like it) still sticks by me:

"O, I will dye my petticoat red,
With my dear boy I'll beg my bread,
Though all my friends should wish me dead,
For Willie among the rushes, O!"

He sang it well even as a song; but he did better yet as a performer. I have heard famous actors, when there was not a dry eye in the Edinburgh theater; a great wonder to behold; but no more wonderful than how the Master played upon that little ballad and on those who heard him like an instrument, and seemed now upon the point of failing, and now to conquer his distress, so that words and music seemed to pour out of his own heart and his own past, and to be aimed direct at Mrs. Henry. And his art went further yet; for all was so delicately touched, it seemed impossible to suspect him of the least design; and so far from making a parade of emotion, you would have sworn he was striving to be calm. When it came to an end we all sat silent for a time; he had chosen the dusk of the afternoon, so that none could see his neighbor's face; but it seemed as if we held our breathing, only my old lord cleared his throat. The first to move was the singer, who got to his feet suddenly and softly, and went and walked softly to and fro in the low end of the hall, Mr. Henry's customary place. We were to suppose that he there struggled down the last of his emotion; for he presently returned and launched into a disquisition on the nature of the Irish (always so much miscalled, and whom he defended) in his natural voice; so that, before the lights were brought we were in the usual course of talk. But even then, methought Mrs. Henry's face was a shade pale; and for another thing, she withdrew almost at once.

The next sign was a friendship this insidious devil struck up with innocent Miss Katharine; so that they were always together, hand in hand, or she climbing on his knee, like a pair of children. Like all his diabolical acts, this cut in several ways. It was the last stroke to Mr. Henry, to see his own babe debauched against him; it made him harsh with the poor innocent, which brought him still a peg lower in his wife's esteem; and (to conclude) it was a bond of union between the lady and the Master. Under this influence their old reserve melted by daily stages. Presently there came walks in the long shrubbery, talks in the belvedere, and I know not what tender familiarity. I am sure Mrs. Henry was like many a good woman; she had a whole conscience, but perhaps by the means of a little winking. For even to so dull an observer as myself, it was plain her kindness was of a more moving nature than the sisterly. The tones of her voice appeared more numerous; she had a light and softness in her eye; she was more gentle with all of us, even with Mr. Henry, even with myself; methought she breathed of some quiet, melancholy happiness.

To look on at this, what a torment it was for Mr. Henry! And yet it brought our ultimate deliverance, as I am soon to tell.

The purport of the Master's stay was no more noble (gild it as they might) than to wring money out. He had some design of a fortune in the French Indies, as the chevalier wrote me; and it was the sum required for this that he came seeking. For the rest of the family it spelled ruin; but my lord, in his incredible partiality, pushed ever for the granting. The family was now so narrowed down (indeed there were no more of them than just the father and the two sons), that it was possible to break the entail, and alienate a piece of land. And to this, at first by hints, and then by open pressure, Mr. Henry was brought to consent. He never would have done so, I am very well assured, but for the weight of the distress under which he labored. But for his passionate eagerness to see his brother gone, he would not thus have broken with his own sentiment and the traditions of his house. And even so, he sold them his consent at a dear rate, speaking for once openly and holding the business up in its own shameful colors.

"You will observe," he said, "this is an injustice to my son, if ever I have one."

"But that you are not likely to have," said my lord.

"God knows!" said Mr. Henry. "And considering the cruel falseness of the position in which I stand to my brother, and that you, my lord, are my father and have the right to command me, I set my hand to this paper. But one thing I will say first: I have been ungenerously pushed, and when next, my lord, you are tempted to compare your sons, I call on you to remember what I have done and what he has done. Acts are the fair test."

My lord was the most uneasy man I ever saw; even in his old face the blood came up. "I think this is not a very wisely chosen moment, Henry, for complaints," said he. "This takes away from the merit of your generosity."

"Do not deceive yourself, my lord," said Mr. Henry. "This injustice is not done from generosity to him, but in obedience to yourself."

"Before strangers—" begins my lord, still more unhappily affected.

"There is no one but Mackellar here," said Mr. Henry; "he is my friend. And, my lord, as you make him no stranger to your frequent blame, it were hard if I must keep him one to a thing so rare as my defense."

Almost I believe my lord would have rescinded his decision; but the Master was on the watch.

"Ah, Henry, Henry," says he, "you are the best of us still. Rugged and true! Ah, man, I wish I was as good."

And at that instance of his favorite's generosity, my lord desisted from his hesitation, and the deed was signed.

As soon as it could be brought about, the land of Ochterhall was sold for much below its value, and the money paid over to our leech and sent by some private carriage into France. Or so he said; though I have suspected since it did not go so far. And now here was all the man's business brought to a successful head, and his pockets once more bulging with our gold; and yet the point for which we had consented to this sacrifice was still denied us, and the visitor still lingered on at Durrisdeer. Whether in malice, or because the time was not yet come for his adventure to the Indies, or because he had hopes of his design on Mrs. Henry, or from the orders of the government, who shall say? but linger he did and that for weeks.

You will observe I say: from the orders of government; for about this time the man's disreputable secret trickled out.

The first hint I had was from a tenant, who commented on the Master's stay and yet more on his security; for this tenant was a Jacobitish sympathizer, and had lost a son at Culloden, which gave him the more critical eye. "There is one thing," said he, "that I can not but think strange; and that is how he got to Cockermouth."

"To Cockermouth?" said I, with a sudden memory of my first wonder on beholding the man disembark so point-de-vice after so long a voyage.

"Why, yes," says the tenant, "it was there he was picked up by Captain Crail. You thought he had come from France by sea? And so we all did."

I turned this news a little in my head, and then carried it to Mr. Henry. "Here is an odd circumstance," said I, and told him.

"What matters how he came, Mackellar, as long as he is here," groans Mr. Henry.

"No, sir," said I, "but think again! Does not this smack a little of some government connivance? You know how much we have wondered already at the man's security."

"Stop," said Mr. Henry. "Let me think of this." And as he thought there came that grim smile upon his face that was a little like the Master's. "Give me paper," said he. And he sat without another word and wrote to a gentleman of his acquaintance—I will name no unnecessary names, but he was one in a high place. This letter I despatched by the only hand I could depend upon in such a case, Macconochie's; and the old man rode hard, for he was back with the reply before even my eagerness had ventured to expect him. Again, as he read it, Mr. Henry had the same grim smile.

"This is the best you have done for me yet, Mackellar," says he. "With this in my hand, I will give him a shog. Watch for us at dinner."

At dinner accordingly, Mr. Henry proposed some very public appearance for the Master; and my lord, as he had hoped, objected to the danger of the course.

"Oh," says Mr. Henry, very easily, "you need no longer keep this up with me. I am as much in the secret as yourself."

"In the secret?" says my lord. "What do you mean, Henry? I give you my word I am in no secret from which you are excluded."

The Master had changed countenance, and I saw he was struck in a joint of his harness.

"How?" says Mr. Henry, turning to him with a huge appearance of surprise. "I see you serve your masters very faithfully; but I had thought you would have been humane enough to set your father's mind at rest."

"What are you talking of? I refuse to have my business publicly discussed. I order this to cease," cries the Master very foolishly and passionately, and indeed more like a child than a man.

"So much discretion was not looked for at your hands, I can assure you," continued Mr. Henry. "For see what my correspondent writes"—unfolding the paper—" 'It is, of course, in the interests both of the government and the gentleman whom we may perhaps best continue to call Mr. Bally, to keep this understanding secret; but it was never meant his own family should continue to endure the suspense you paint so feelingly; and I am pleased mine should be the hand to set these fears at rest. Mr. Bally is as safe in Great Britain as yourself.' "

"Is this possible?" cries my lord, looking at his son, with a great deal of wonder and still more of suspicion in his face.

"My dear father," says the Master, already much recovered, "I am overjoyed that this may be disclosed. My own instructions direct from London bore a very contrary sense, and I was charged to keep the indulgence secret from every one, yourself not excepted, and indeed yourself expressly named—as I can show in black and white, unless I have destroyed the letter. They must have changed their mind very swiftly, for the whole matter is still quite fresh; or rather Henry's correspondent must have misconceived that part, as he seems to have misconceived the rest. To tell you the truth, sir," he continued, getting visibly more easy, "I had supposed this unexplained favor to a rebel was the effect of some application from yourself; and the injunction to secrecy among my family the result of a desire on your part to conceal your kindness. Hence I was the more careful to obey orders. It remains now to guess by what other channel indulgence can have flowed on so notorious an offender as myself; for I do not think your son need defend himself from what seems hinted at in Henry's letter. I have never yet heard of a Durrisdeer who was a turncoat or a spy," says he proudly.

And so it seemed he had swum out of this danger unharmed; but this was to reckon without a blunder he had made, and without the pertinacity of Mr. Henry, who was now to show he had something of his brother's spirit.

"You say the matter is still fresh," says Mr. Henry.

"It is recent," says the Master, with a fair show of stoutness and yet not without a quaver.

"Is it so recent as that?" asks Mr. Henry, like a man a little puzzled, and spreading his letter forth again.

In all the letter there was no word as to the date, but how was the Master to know that?

"It seemed to come late enough for me," says he, with a laugh. And at the sound of that laugh, which rang false like a cracked bell, my lord looked at him again across the table, and I saw his old lips draw together close.

"No," said Mr. Henry, still glancing on his letter, "but I remember your expression. You said it was very fresh."

And here we had a proof of our victory, and the strongest instance yet of my lord's incredible indulgence; for what must he do but interfere to save his favorite from exposure!

"I think, Henry," says he, with a kind of pitiful eagerness, "I think we need dispute no more. We are all rejoiced at last to find your brother safe; we are all at one on that; and as grateful subjects we can do no less than drink to the king's health and bounty."

Thus was the Master extricated; but at least he had been put to his defense, he had come lamely out, and the attraction of his personal danger was now publicly plucked away from him. My lord, in his heart of hearts, now knew his favorite to be a government spy; and Mrs. Henry (however she explained the tale) was notably cold in her behavior to the discredited hero of romance. Thus in the best fabric of duplicity there is some weak point, if you can strike it, which will loosen all; and if, by this fortunate stroke, we had not shaken the idol, who can say how it might have gone with us at the catastrophe?

And yet at the time we seemed to have accomplished nothing. Before a day or two he had wiped off the ill results of his discomfiture, and to all appearance stood as high as ever. As for my Lord Durrisdeer, he was sunk in parental partiality; it was not so much love, which should be an active quality, as an apathy and torpor of his other powers; and forgiveness (so to misapply a noble word) flowed from him in sheer weakness, like the tears of senility. Mrs. Henry's was a different case; and Heaven alone knows what he found to say to her or how he persuaded her from her contempt. It is one of the worst things of sentiment that the voice grows to be more important than the words, and the speaker than that which is spoken. But some excuse the Master must have found, or perhaps he had even struck upon some art to wrest this exposure to his own advantage; for after a time of coldness, it seemed as if things went worse than ever between him and Mrs. Henry. They were then constantly together. I would not be thought to cast one shadow of blame, beyond what is due to a half-wilful blindness, on that unfortunate lady; but I do think, in these last days, she was playing very near the fire; and whether I be wrong or not in that, one thing is sure and quite sufficient: Mr. Henry thought so. The poor gentleman sat for days in my room, so great a picture of distress that I could never venture to address him; yet it is to be thought he found some comfort even in my presence and the knowledge of my sympathy. There were times, too, when we talked, and a strange manner of talk it was; there was never a person named, nor an individual circumstance referred to; yet we had the same matter in our mind, and we were each aware of it. It is a strange art that can thus be practised: to talk for hours of a thing, and never name nor yet so much as hint at it. And I remember I wondered if it was by some such natural skill that the Master made love to Mrs. Henry all day long (as he manifestly did), yet never startled her into reserve.

To show how far affairs had gone with Mr. Henry, I will give some words of his, uttered (as I have cause not to forget) upon the 26th of February, 1757. It was unseasonable weather, a cast back into winter: windless, bitter cold, the world all white with rime, the sky low and gray; the sea black and silent like a quarry hole. Mr. Henry sat close by the fire and debated (as was now common with him) whether "a man" should "do things," whether "interference was wise," and the like general propositions, which each of us particularly applied. I was by the window looking out, when there passed below me the Master, Mrs. Henry and Miss Katharine, that now constant trio. The child was running to and fro delighted with the frost; the Master spoke close in the lady's ear with what seemed (even from so far) a devilish grace of insinuation; and she on her part looked on the ground like a person lost in listening. I broke out of my reserve.

"If I were you, Mr. Henry," said I, "I would deal openly with my lord."

"Mackellar, Mackellar," said he, "you do not see the weakness of my ground. I can carry no such base thoughts to any one: to my father least of all; that would be to fall into the bottom of his scorn. The weakness of my ground," he continued, "lies in myself, that I am not one who engages love. I have their gratitude, they all tell me that: I have a rich estate of it! But I am not present in their minds; they are moved neither to think with me nor to think for me. There is my loss!" He got to his feet and trod down the fire. "But some method must be found, Mackellar," said he, looking at me suddenly over his shoulder; "some way must be found. I am a man of a great deal of patience—far too much—far too much. I begin to despise myself. And yet sure never was a man involved in such a toil!" He fell back to his brooding.

"Cheer up," said I. "It will burst of itself."

"I am far past anger now," says he, which had so little coherency with my own observation that I let both fall.

ACCOUNT OF ALL THAT PASSED ON THE NIGHT OF FEBRUARY 27, 1757

ON THE evening of the interview referred to, the Master went abroad; he was abroad a great deal of the next day also, that fatal 27th; but where he went or what he did, we never concerned ourselves to ask until next day. If we had done so, and by any chance found out, it might have changed all. But as all we did was done in ignorance, and should be so judged, I shall so narrate these passages as they appeared to us in the moment of their birth, and reserve all that I since discovered for the time of its discovery. For I have now come to one of the dark parts of my narrative, and must engage the reader's indulgence for my patron.

All the 27th, that rigorous weather endured: a stifling cold; the folk passing about like smoking chimneys; the wide hearth in the hall piled high with fuel; some of the spring birds that had already blundered north into our neighborhood besieging the windows of the house or trotting on the frozen turf like things distracted. About noon there came a blink of sunshine, showing a very pretty, wintry, frosty landscape of white hills and woods, with Crail's lugger waiting for a wind under the Craig Head, and the smoke mounting straight into the air from every farm and cottage. With the coming of night the haze closed in overhead; it fell dark and still and starless and exceeding cold: a night the most unseasonable, fit for strange events.

Mrs. Henry withdrew, as was now her custom, very early. We had set ourselves of late to pass the evening with a game of cards; another mark that our visitor was wearying mightily of the life at Durrisdeer; and we had not been long at this when my old lord slipped from his place beside the fire, and was off without a word to seek the warmth of bed. The three thus left together had neither love nor courtesy to share; not one of us would have sat up one instant to oblige another; yet from the influence of custom and as the cards had just been dealt, we continued the form of playing out the round. I should say we were late sitters; and though my lord had departed earlier than was his custom, twelve was already gone some time upon the clock, and the servants long ago in bed. Another thing I should say, that although I never saw the Master any way affected with liquor, he had been drinking freely and was perhaps (although he showed it not) a trifle heated.

Any way, he now practised one of his transitions; and so soon as the door closed behind my lord, and without the smallest change of voice, shifted from ordinary civil talk into a stream of insult.

"My dear Henry, it is yours to play," he had been saying, and now continued: "It is a very strange thing how, even in so small a matter as a game of cards, you display your rusticity. You play, Jacob, like a bonnet laird, or a sailor in a tavern. The same dulness, the same petty greed, *cette lenteur d'hébété qui me fait rager;* it is strange I should have such a brother. Even Squaretoes has a certain vivacity when his stake is imperiled; but the dreariness of a game with you, I positively lack language to depict."

Mr. Henry continued to look at his cards, as though very maturely considering some play; but his mind was elsewhere.

"Dear God, will this never be done?" cries the Master. "*Quel lourdeau!* But why do I trouble you with French expressions, which are lost on such an ignoramus? A *lourdeau,* my dear brother, is as we might say a bumpkin, a clown, a clodpole: a fellow without grace, lightness, quickness; any gift of pleasing, any natural brilliancy: such a one as you shall see, when you desire, by looking in the mirror. I tell you these things for your good, I assure you; and besides, Squaretoes" (looking at me and stifling a yawn), "it is one of my diversions in this very dreary spot, to toast you and your master at the fire like chestnuts. I have great pleasure in your case, for I observe the nickname (rustic as it is) has always the power to make you writhe. But sometimes I have more trouble with this dear fellow here, who seems to have gone to sleep upon his cards. Do you not see the applicability of the epithet I have just explained, dear Henry? Let me show you. For instance, with all those solid qualities which I delight to recognize in you, I never knew a woman who did not prefer me—nor, I think," he continued, with the most silken deliberation, "I think—who did not continue to prefer me."

Mr. Henry laid down his cards. He rose to his feet very softly, and seemed all the while like a person in deep thought. "You coward!" he said gently, as if to himself. And then, with neither hurry nor any particular violence, he struck the Master in the mouth.

The Master sprang to his feet like one transfigured. I had never seen the man so beautiful.

"A blow!" he cried. "I would not take a blow from God Almighty."

"Lower your voice," said Mr. Henry. "Do you wish my father to interfere for you again?"

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," I cried, and sought to come between them.

The Master caught me by the shoulder, held me at arm's length, and still addressing his brother: "Do you know what this means?" said he.

"It was the most deliberate act of my life," says Mr. Henry.

"I must have blood, I must have blood for this," says the Master.

"Please God it shall be yours," said Mr. Henry; and he went to the wall and took down a pair of swords that hung there with others, naked. These he presented to the Master by the points. "Mackellar shall see us play fair," said Mr. Henry. "I think it very needful."

"You need insult me no more," said the Master, taking one of the swords at random. "I have hated you all my life."

"My father is but newly gone to bed," said Mr. Henry. "We must go somewhere forth of the house."

"There is an excellent place in the long shrubbery," said the Master.

"Gentlemen," said I, "shame upon you both! Sons of the same mother, would you turn against the life she gave you?"

"Even so, Mackellar," said Mr. Henry, with the same perfect quietude of manner he had shown throughout.

"It is what I will prevent," said I.

And now here is a blot upon my life. At these words of mine the Master turned his blade against my bosom; I saw the light run along the steel; and I threw up my arms and fell to my knees before him on the floor. "No, no," I cried, like a baby.

"We shall have no more trouble with him," said the Master. "It is a good thing to have a coward in the house."

"We must have light," said Mr. Henry, as though there had been no interruption.

"This trembler can bring a pair of candles," said the Master.

To my shame be it said, I was so blinded with the flashing of that bare sword that I volunteered to bring a lantern.

"We do not need a l-l-lantern," said the Master, mocking me. "There is no breath of air. Come, get to your feet, take a pair of lights, and go before. I am close behind with this—" making the blade glitter as he spoke.

I took up the candlesticks and went before them, steps that I would give my hand to recall; but a coward is a slave at the best; and even as I went, my teeth smote each other in my mouth. It was as he had said, there was no breath stirring; a windless stricture of frost had bound the air; and as we went forth in the shine of the candles the blackness was like a roof over our heads. Never a word was said, there was never a sound but the creaking of our steps along the frozen path. The cold of the night fell about me like a bucket of water; I shook as I went with more than terror; but my companions, bareheaded like myself, and fresh from the warm hall, appeared not even conscious of the change.

"Here is the place," said the Master. "Set down the candles."

I did as he bade me, and presently the flames went up as steady as in a chamber in the midst of the frosted trees, and I beheld these two brothers take their places.

"The light is something in my eyes," said the Master.

"I will give you every advantage," replied Mr. Henry, shifting his ground, "for I think you are about to die." He spoke rather sadly than otherwise, yet there was a ring in his voice.

"Henry Durie," said the Master, "two words before I begin. You are a fencer, you can hold a foil; you little know what a change it makes to hold a sword! And by that I know you are to fall. But see how strong is my situation! If you fall, I shift out of this country to where my money is before me. If I fall, where are you? My father, your wife who is in love with me—as you very well know—your child even who prefers me to yourself: how will these avenge me! Had you thought of that, dear Henry?" He looked at his brother with a smile; then made a fencing-room salute.

Never a word said Mr. Henry, but saluted too, and the swords rang together.

I am no judge of the play; my head, besides, was gone with cold and fear and horror; but it seems that Mr. Henry took and kept the upper hand from the engagement, crowding in upon his foe with a contained and growing fury. Nearer and nearer he crept upon the man till, of a sudden, the Master leaped back with a little sobbing oath; and I believe the movement brought the light once more against his eyes. To it they went again, on the fresh ground; but now methought closer, Mr. Henry pressing more outrageously, the Master beyond doubt with shaken confidence. For it is beyond doubt he now recognized himself for lost, and had some taste of the cold agony of fear; or he had never attempted the foul stroke. I can not say I followed it, my untrained eye was never quick enough to seize details, but it appears he caught his brother's blade with his left hand, a practise not permitted. Certainly Mr. Henry only saved himself by leaping on one side; as certainly the Master, lunging in the air, stumbled on his knee, and before he could move the sword was through his body.

I cried out with a stifled scream, and ran in; but the body was already fallen to the ground, where it writhed a moment like a trodden worm, and then lay motionless.

"Look at his left hand," said Mr. Henry.

"It is all bloody," said I.

"On the inside?" said he.

"It is cut on the inside," said I.

"I thought so," said he, and turned his back.

I opened the man's clothes; the heart was quite still, it gave not a flutter.

"God forgive us, Mr. Henry!" said I. "He is dead."

"Dead?" he repeated, a little stupidly; and then with a rising tone, "Dead? dead?" says he, and suddenly cast his bloody sword upon the ground.

"What must we do?" said I. "Be yourself, sir. It is too late now: you must be yourself."

He turned and stared at me. "Oh, Mackellar!" says he, and put his face in his hands.

I plucked him by the coat. "For God's sake, for all our sakes, be more courageous!" said I. "What must we do?"

He showed me his face with the same stupid stare. "Do?" says he. And with that his eye fell on the body, and "oh!" he cries out, with his hand to his brow, as if he had never remembered; and turning from me, made off toward the house of Durrisdeer at a strange, stumbling run.

I stood a moment, mused; then it seemed to me my duty lay most plain on the side of the living; and I ran after him, leaving the candles on the frosty ground and the body lying in their light under the trees. But run as I pleased, he had the start of me, and was got into the house, and up to the hall, where I found him standing before the fire with his face once more in his hands, and as he so stood, he visibly shuddered.

"Mr. Henry, Mr. Henry," I said, "this will be the ruin of us all."

"What is this that I have done?" cries he, and then, looking upon me with a countenance that I shall never forget, "Who is to tell the old man?" he said.

The word knocked at my heart; but it was no time for weakness. I went and poured him out a glass of brandy. "Drink that," said I, "drink it down." I forced him to swallow it like a child; and, being still perished with the cold of the night, I followed his example.

"It has to be told, Mackellar," said he. "It must be told." And he fell suddenly in a seat—my old lord's seat by the chimney-side—and was shaken with dry sobs.

Dismay came upon my soul; it was plain there was no help in Mr. Henry. "Well," said I, "sit there, and leave all to me." And taking a candle in my hand, I set forth out of the room in the dark house. There was no movement; I must suppose that all had gone unobserved; and I was now to consider how to smuggle through the rest with the like secrecy. It was no hour for scruples; and I opened my lady's door without so much as a knock, and passed boldly in.

"There is some calamity happened," she cried, sitting up in bed.

"Madam," said I, "I will go forth again into the passage; and do you get as quickly as you can into your clothes. There is much to be done."

She troubled me with no questions, nor did she keep me waiting. Ere I had time to prepare a word of that which I must say to her, she was on the threshold signing me to enter.

"Madam," said I, "if you can not be very brave, I must go elsewhere; for if no one helps me to-night, there is an end of the house of Durrisdeer."

"I am very courageous," said she; and she looked at me with a sort of smile, very painful to see, but very brave too.

"It has come to a duel," said I.

"A duel?" she repeated. "A duel! Henry and—"

"And the Master," said I. "Things have been borne so long, things of which you know nothing, which you would not believe if I should tell. But to-night it went too far, and when he insulted you—"

"Stop," said she. "He? Who?"

"Oh, madam!" cried I, my bitterness breaking forth, "do you ask me such a question? Indeed, then, I may go elsewhere for help; there is none here!"

"I do not know in what I have offended you," said she. "Forgive me; put me out of this suspense."

But I dared not tell her yet; I felt not sure of her; and at the doubt and under the sense of impotence it brought with it, I turned on the poor woman with something near to anger.

"Madam," said I, "we are speaking of two men; one of them insulted you, and you ask me which. I will help you to the answer. With one of these men you have spent all your hours; has the other reproached you? To one you have been always kind; to the other, as God sees me and judges between us two, I think not always; has his love ever failed you? To-night one of these two men told the other, in my hearing—the hearing of a hired stranger—that you were in love with him. Before I say one word, you shall answer your own question: Which was it? Nay, madam, you shall answer me another: If it has come to this dreadful end, whose fault is it?"

She stared at me like one dazzled. "Good God!" she said once, in a kind of bursting exclamation; and then a second time, in a whisper to herself, "Great God! In the name of mercy, Mackellar, what is wrong?" she cried. "I am made up; I can hear all."

"You are not fit to hear," said I. "Whatever it was, you shall say first it was your fault."

"Oh!" she cried, with a gesture of wringing her hands, "this man will drive me mad! Can you not put *me* out of your thoughts?"

"I think not once of you," I cried. "I think of none but my dear unhappy master."

"Ah!" she cried, with her hand to her heart, "is Henry dead?"

"Lower your voice," said I. "The other."

I saw her sway like something stricken by the wind, and

I know not whether in cowardice or misery, turned aside and looked upon the floor. "These are dreadful tidings," said I at length, when her silence began to put me in some fear; "and you and I behoove to be the more bold if the house is to be saved." Still she answered nothing. "There is Miss Katharine besides," I added: "unless we bring this matter through her inheritance is like to be of shame."

I do not know if it was the thought of her child or the naked word shame that gave her deliverance; at least I had no sooner spoken than a sound passed her lips, the like of it I never heard; it was as though she had lain buried under a hill and sought to move that burden. And the next moment she had found a sort of voice.

"It was a fight," she whispered. "It was not—" and she paused upon the word.

"It was a fair fight on my dear master's part," said I. "As for the other, he was slain in the very act of a foul stroke."

"Not now!" she cried.

"Madam," said I, "hatred of that man glows in my bosom like a burning fire; ay, even now he is dead. God knows, I would have stopped the fighting had I dared. It is my shame I did not. But when I saw him fall, if I could have spared one thought from pitying of my master, it had been to exult in that deliverance."

I do not know if she marked; but her next words were: "My lord?"

"That shall be my part," said I.

"You will not speak to him as you have to me?" she asked.

"Madam," said I, "have you not some one else to think of? Leave my lord to me."

"Some one else?" she repeated.

"Your husband," said I. She looked at me with a countenance illegible. "Are you going to turn your back on him?" I asked.

Still she looked at me; then her hand went to her heart again. "No," said she.

"God bless you for that word!" I said. "Go to him now where he sits in the hall; speak to him—it matters not what you say; give him your hand; say, 'I know all'; if God gives you grace enough, say 'Forgive me.' "

"God strengthen you, and make you merciful," said she. "I will go to my husband."

"Let me light you there," said I, taking up the candle.

"I will find my way in the dark," she said, with a shudder, and I think the shudder was at me.

So we separated, she downstairs to where a little light glimmered in the hall door, I along the passage to my lord's room. It seems hard to say why, but I could not burst in on the old man as I could on the young woman; with whatever reluctance, I must knock. But his old slumbers were light, or perhaps he slept not; and at the first summons I was bidden enter.

He too sat up in bed; very aged and bloodless he looked; and whereas he had a certain largeness of appearance when dressed for daylight, he now seemed frail and little, and his face (the wig being laid aside) not bigger than a child's. This daunted me; nor less, the haggard surmise of misfortune in his eye. Yet his voice was even peaceful as he inquired my errand. I sat my candle down upon a chair, leaned on the bed-foot, and looked at him.

"Lord Durrisdeer," said I, "it is very well known to you that I am a partizan in your family."

"I hope we are none of us partizans," said he. "That you love my son sincerely, I have always been glad to recognize."

"Oh, my lord, we are past the hour of these civilities," I replied. "If we are to save anything out of the fire, we must look the fact in its bare countenance. A partizan I am; partizans we have all been; it is as a partizan that I am here in the middle of the night to plead before you. Hear me; before I go, I will tell you why."

"I would always hear you, Mr. Mackellar," said he, "and that at any hour, whether of the day or night, for I would be always sure you had a reason. You spoke once before to very proper purpose; I have not forgotten that."

"I am here to plead the cause of my master," I said. "I need not tell you how he acts. You know how he is placed. You know with what generosity he has always met your other—met your wishes," I corrected myself, stumbling at that name of son. "You know—you must know—what he has suffered—what he has suffered about his wife."

"Mr. Mackellar!" cried my lord, rising in bed like a bearded lion.

"You said you would hear me," I continued. "What you do not know, what you should know, one of the things I am here to speak of—is the persecution he must bear in private. Your back is not turned before one whom I dare not name to you falls upon him with the most unfeeling taunts; twits him—pardon me, my lord!—twits him with your partiality, calls him Jacob, calls him clown, pursues him with ungenerous raillery, not to be borne by man. And let but one of you appear, instantly he changes; and my master must smile and courtesy to the man who has been feeding him with insults; I know—for I have shared in some of it, and I tell you the life is insupportable. All these months it has endured; it began with the man's landing; it was by the name of Jacob that my master was greeted the first night."

My lord made a movement as if to throw aside the clothes and rise. "If there be any truth in this—" said he.

"Do I look like a man lying?" I interrupted, checking him with my hand.

"You should have told me at first," he said.

"Ah, my lord, indeed I should, and you may well hate the face of this unfaithful servant!" I cried.

"I will take order," said he, "at once." And again made the movement to rise.

Again I checked him. "I have not done," said I. "Would God I had! All this my dear, unfortunate patron has endured without help or countenance. Your own best word, my lord, was only gratitude. Oh, but he was your son, too! He had no other father. He was hated in the country, God knows how unjustly. He had a loveless marriage. He stood on all hands without affection or support, dear, generous, ill-fated, noble heart."

"Your tears do you much honor and me much shame," says my lord, with a palsied trembling. "But you do me some injustice. Henry has been ever dear to me, very dear. James (I do not deny it, Mr. Mackellar), James is perhaps dearer; you have not seen my James in quite a favorable light; he has suffered under his misfortunes; and we can only remember how great and how unmerited these were. And even now his is the more affectionate nature. But I will not speak of him. All that you say of Henry is most true; I do not wonder, I know him to be very magnanimous; you will say I trade upon the knowledge? It is possible; there are dangerous virtues; virtues that tempt the encroacher. Mr. Mackellar, I will make it up to him; I will take order with all this. I have been weak; and what is worse, I have been dull."

"I must not hear you blame yourself, my lord, with that which I have yet to tell upon my conscience," I replied. "You have not been weak; you have been abused by a devilish dissembler. You saw yourself how he had deceived you in the matter of his danger; he has deceived you throughout in every step of his career. I wish to pluck him from your heart; I wish to force your eyes upon your other son; ah, you have a son there!"

"No, no," said he, "two sons—I have two sons."

I made some gesture of despair that struck him; he looked at me with a changed face. "There is much worse behind?" he asked, his voice dying as it rose upon the question.

"Much worse," I answered. "This night he said these words to Mr. Henry: 'I have never known a woman who did not prefer me to you, and I think who did not continue to prefer me.' "

"I will hear nothing against my daughter!" he cried; and from his readiness to stop me in this direction, I conclude his eyes were not so dull as I had fancied, and he had looked on not without anxiety upon the siege of Mrs. Henry.

"I think not of blaming her," cried I. "It is not that. These words were said in my hearing to Mr. Henry; and if you find them not yet plain enough, these others but a little after: 'Your wife who is in love with me.' "

"They have quarreled?" he said.

I nodded.

"I must fly to them," he said, beginning once again to leave his bed.

"No, no!" I cried, holding forth my hands.

"You do not know," said he. "These are dangerous words."

"Will nothing make you understand, my lord?" said I.

His eyes besought me for the truth.

I flung myself on my knees by the bedside. "Oh, my lord," cried I, "think on him you have left, think of this poor sinner whom you begot, whom your wife bore to you, whom we have none of us strengthened as we could; think of him, not of yourself; he is the other sufferer—think of him! That is the door for sorrow, Christ's door, God's door; oh, it stands open! Think of him, even as he thought of you. *Who is to tell the old man?* these were his words. It was for that I came; that is why I am here pleading at your feet."

"Let me get up," he cried, thrusting me aside, and was on his feet before myself. His voice shook like a sail in the wind, yet he spoke with a good loudness; his face was like the snow, but his eyes were steady and dry. "Here is too much speech!" said he. "Where was it?"

"In the shrubbery," said I.

"And Mr. Henry?" he asked. And when I had told him he knotted his old face in thought.

"And Mr. James?" says he.

"I have left him lying," said I, "beside the candles."

"Candles?" he cried. And with that he ran to the window, opened it, and looked abroad. "It might be spied from the road."

"Where none goes by at such an hour," I objected.

"It makes no matter," he said. "One might. Hark!" cries he. "What is that?"

It was the sound of men very guardedly rowing in the bay; and I told him so.

"The free-traders," said my lord. "Run at once, Mackellar; put these candles out. I will dress in the meanwhile; and when you return we can debate on what is wisest."

I groped my way downstairs, and out at the door. From quite a far way off a sheen was visible, making points of brightness in the shrubbery; in so black a night it might have been remarked for miles; and I blamed myself bitterly for my incaution: How much more sharply when I reached the place! One of the candlesticks was overthrown, and that taper quenched. The other burned steadily by itself, and made a broad space of light upon the frosted ground. All within that circle seemed, by the force of contrast and the overhanging blackness, brighter than by day. And there was the bloodstain in the midst; and a little further off Mr. Henry's sword, the pommel of which was of silver; but of the body not a trace. My heart thumped upon my ribs, the hair stirred upon my scalp, as I stood there staring; so strange was the sight, so dire the fears it wakened. I looked right and left; the ground was so hard it told no story. I stood and listened till my ears ached, but the night was hollow about me like an empty church; not even a ripple stirred upon the shore; it seemed you might have heard a pin drop in the county.

I put the candle out, and the blackness fell about me groping dark; it was like a crowd surrounding me; and I went back to the house of Durrisdeer, with my chin upon my shoulder, startling, as I went, with craven suppositions. In the door a figure moved to meet me, and I had near screamed with terror ere I recognized Mrs. Henry.

"Have you told him?" says she.

"It was he who sent me," said I. "It is gone. But why are you here?"

"It is gone!" she repeated. "What is gone?"

"The body," said I. "Why are you not with your husband?"

"Gone?" said she. "You can not have looked. Come back."

"There is no light now," said I. "I dare not."

"I can see in the dark. I have been standing here so long—so long," said she. "Come; give me your hand."

We returned to the shrubbery hand in hand, and to the fatal place.

"Take care of the blood," said I.

"Blood?" she cried, and started violently back.

"I suppose it will be," said I. "I am like a blind man."

"No," said she, "nothing! Have you not dreamed?"

"Ah, would to God he had!" cried I.

She spied the sword, picked it up, and, seeing the blood, let it fall again with her hands thrown wide. "Ah!" she cried. And then, with an instant courage, handled it the second time and thrust it to the hilt into the frozen ground. "I will take it back and clean it properly," says she, and again looked about her on all sides. "It can not be that he was dead?" she added.

"There was no flutter of his heart," said I, and then remembering: "Why are you not with your husband?"

"It is no use," said she, "he will not speak to me."

"Not speak to you?" I repeated. "Oh, you have not tried!"

"You have a right to doubt me," she replied, with a gentle dignity.

At this, for the first time, I was seized with sorrow for her. "God knows, madam," I cried, "God knows I am not so hard as I appear; on this dreadful night, who can veneer his words? But I am a friend to all who are not Henry Durie's enemies!"

"It is hard, then, you should hesitate about his wife," said she.

I saw all at once, like the rending of a veil, how nobly she had borne this unnatural calamity, and how generously my reproaches.

"We must go back and tell this to my lord," said I.

"Him I can not face," she cried.

"You will find him the least moved of all of us," said I.

"And yet I can not face him," said she.

"Well," said I, "you can return to Mr. Henry; I will see my lord."

As we walked back, I bearing the candlesticks, she the sword—a strange burden for that woman—she had another thought. "Should we tell Henry?" she asked.

"Let my lord decide," said I.

My lord was nearly dressed when I came to his chamber.

He heard me with a frown. "The free-traders," said he. "But whether dead or alive?"

"I thought him—" said I, and paused, ashamed of the word.

"I know; but you may very well have been in error. Why should they remove him if not living?" he asked. "Oh, here is a great door of hope. It must be given out that he departed—as he came—without any note of preparation. We must save all scandal."

I saw he had fallen, like the rest of us, to think mainly of the house. Now that all the living members of the family were plunged in irremediable sorrow, it was strange how we turned to that conjoint abstraction of the family itself, and sought to bolster up the airy nothing of its reputation: not the Duries only, but the hired steward himself.

"Are we to tell Mr. Henry?" I asked him.

"I will see," said he. "I am going first to visit him, then I go forth with you to view the shrubbery and consider."

We went down-stairs into the hall. Mr. Henry sat by the table with his head upon his hand, like a man of stone. His wife stood a little back from him, her hand at her mouth; it was plain she could not move him. My old lord walked very steadily to where his son was sitting; he had a steady countenance too, but methought a little cold; when he was come quite up he held out both his hands and said: "My son!"

With a broken, strangled cry, Mr. Henry leaped up and fell on his father's neck, crying and weeping, the most pitiful sight that ever a man witnessed. "Oh, father," he cried, "you know I loved him; you know I loved him in the beginning; I could have died for him—you know that! I would have given my life for him and you. Oh, say you know that! Oh, say you can forgive me! Oh, father, father, what have I done, what have I done? and we used to be bairns together!" and wept and sobbed, and fondled the old man, and clutched him about the neck, with the passion of a child in terror.

And then he caught sight of his wife, you would have thought for the first time, where she stood weeping to hear him; and in a moment had fallen at her knees. "And oh, my lass," he cried, "you must forgive me, too! Not your husband—I have only been the ruin of your life. But you knew me when I was a lad; there was no harm in Henry Durie then; he meant aye to be a friend to you. It's him—it's the old bairn that played with you—oh, can ye never, never forgive him?"

Throughout all this my lord was like a cold, kind spectator with his wits about him. At the first cry, which was indeed enough to call the house about us, he had said to me over his shoulder, "Close the door." And now he nodded to himself.

"We may leave him to his wife now," says he. "Bring a light, Mr. Mackellar."

Upon my going forth again with my lord, I was aware of a strange phenomenon; for though it was quite dark, and the night not yet old, methought I smelled the morning. At the same time there went a tossing through the branches of the evergreens, so that they sounded like a quiet sea; and the air puffed at times against our faces, and the flame of the candle shook. We made the more speed, I believe, being surrounded by this bustle; visited the scene of the duel, where my lord looked upon the blood with stoicism; and passing further on toward the landing-place, came at last upon some evidences of the truth. For first of all, where there was a pool across the path, the ice had been trodden in, plainly by more than one man's weight; next, and but a little further, a young tree was broken; and down by the landing-place, where the traders' boats were usually beached, another stain of blood marked where the body must have been infallibly set down to rest the bearers.

This stain we set ourselves to wash away with the sea-water, carrying it in my lord's hat; and as we were thus engaged there came up a sudden, moaning gust and left us instantly benighted.

"It will come to snow," says my lord; "and the best thing that we could hope. Let us go back now; we can do nothing in the dark."

As we went houseward, the wind being again subsided, we were aware of a strong pattering noise about us in the night; and when we issued from the shelter of the trees, we found it raining smartly.

Throughout the whole of this, my lord's clearness of mind, no less than his activity of body, had not ceased to minister to my amazement. He set the crown upon it in the council we held on our return. The free-traders had certainly secured the Master, though whether dead or alive we were still left to our conjectures; the rain would, long before day, wipe out all marks of the transaction; by this we must profit: the Master had unexpectedly come after the fall of night, it must now be given out he had as suddenly departed before the break of day; and to make all this plausible, it now only remained for me to mount into the man's chamber, and pack and conceal his baggage. True, we still lay at the discretion of the traders; but that was the incurable weakness of our guilt.

I heard him, as I said, with wonder, and hastened to obey. Mr. and Mrs. Henry were gone from the hall; my lord, for warmth's sake, hurried to his bed; there was still no sign of stir among the servants, and as I went up the tower stair, and entered the dead man's room, a horror of solitude weighed upon my mind. To my extreme surprise, it was all in the disorder of departure. Of his three portmanteaus, two were ready locked, the third lay open and near full. At once there flashed upon me some suspicion of the truth. The man had been going after all; he had but waited upon Crail, as Crail waited upon the wind; early in the night the seamen had perceived the weather changing; the boat had come to give notice of the change and call the passenger aboard, and the boat's crew had stumbled on him lying in his blood. Nay, and there was more behind. This prearranged departure shed some light upon his inconceivable insult of the night before; it was a parting shot; hatred being no longer checked by policy. And for another thing, the nature of that insult, and the conduct of Mrs. Henry, pointed to one conclusion: which I have never verified, and can now never verify until the great assize, the conclusion that he had at last forgotten himself, had gone too far in his advances, and had been rebuffed. It can never be verified, as I say; but as I thought of it that morning among his baggage, the thought was sweet to me like honey.

Into the open portmanteau I dipped a little ere I closed it. The most beautiful lace and linen, many suits of those fine plain clothes in which he loved to appear; a book or two, and those of the best, Cæsar's "Commentaries," a volume of Mr. Hobbes, the "Henriade" of M. de Voltaire, a book upon the Indies, one on the mathematics, far beyond where I have studied: these were what I observed with very mingled feelings. But in the open portmanteau, no papers of any description. This set me musing. It was possible the man was dead; but, since the traders had carried him away, not likely. It was possible he might still die of his wound; but it was also possible he might not. And in this latter case I was determined to have the means of some defense.

One after another I carried his portmanteaus to a loft in the top of the house which we kept locked; went to my own room for my keys, and returning to the loft, had the gratification to find two that fitted pretty well. In one of the portmanteaus there was a shagreen letter-case, which I cut open with my knife; and thenceforth (so far as any credit went) the man was at my mercy. Here was a vast deal of gallant correspondence, chiefly of his Paris days; and what was more to the purpose, here were the copies of his own reports to the English secretary, and the originals of the secretary's answers: a most damning series: such as to publish would be to wreck the Master's honor and to set a price upon his life. I chuckled to myself as I ran through the documents; I rubbed my hands, I sung aloud in my glee. Day found me at the pleasing task, nor did I then remit my diligence, except in so far as I went to the window—looked out for a moment, to see the frost quite gone, the world turned black again, and the rain and the wind driving in the bay—and to assure myself that the lugger was gone from its anchorage, and the Master (whether dead or alive) now tumbling on the Irish Sea.

It is proper I should add in this place the very little I have subsequently angled out upon the doings of that night. It took me a long while to gather it; for we dared not openly ask, and the free-traders regarded me with enmity, if not with scorn. It was near six months before we even knew for certain that the man survived; and it was years before I learned from one of Crail's men, turned publican on his ill-gotten gain, some particulars which smack to me of truth. It seems the traders found the Master struggled on one elbow, and now staring round him, and now gazing at the candle or at his hand, which was all bloodied, like a man stupid. Upon their coming he would seem to have found his mind, bade them carry him aboard and hold their tongues; and on the captain asking how he had come in such a pickle, replied with a burst of passionate swearing, and incontinently fainted. They held some debate, but they were momently looking for a wind, they were highly paid to smuggle him to France, and did not care to delay. Besides which, he was well enough liked by these abominable wretches: they supposed him under capital sentence, knew not in what mischief he might have got his wound, and judged it a piece of good nature to remove him out of the way of danger. So he was taken aboard, recovered on the passage over, and was set ashore a convalescent at the Havre de Grace. What is truly notable: he said not a word to any one of the duel, and not a trader knows to this day in what quarrel, or by the hand of what adversary, he fell. With any other man I should have set this down to natural decency; with him, to pride. He could not bear to avow, perhaps even to himself, that he had been vanquished by one whom he had so much insulted and whom he so cruelly despised.

SUMMARY OF EVENTS DURING THE MASTER'S SECOND ABSENCE

OF THE heavy sickness which declared itself next morning, I can think with equanimity as of the last unmingled trouble that befell my master; and even that was perhaps a mercy in disguise; for what pains of the body could equal the miseries of his mind? Mrs. Henry and I had the watching by the bed. My old lord called from time to time to take the news, but would not usually pass the door. Once, I remember, when hope was nigh gone, he stepped to the bedside, looked awhile in his son's face, and turned away with a singular gesture of the head and hand thrown up, that remains upon my mind as something tragic; such grief and such a scorn of sublunary things were there expressed. But the most of the time, Mrs. Henry and I had the room to ourselves, taking turns by night and bearing each other company by day, for it was dreary watching. Mr. Henry, his shaven head bound in a napkin, tossed to and fro without remission, beating the bed with his hands. His tongue never lay; his voice ran continuously like a river, so that my heart was weary with the sound of it. It was notable, and to me inexpressibly mortifying, that he spoke all the while on matters of no import: comings and goings, horses—which he was ever calling to have saddled, thinking perhaps (the poor soul!) that he might ride away from his discomfort—matters of the garden, the salmon nets, and (what I particularly raged to hear) continually of his affairs, ciphering figures and holding disputation with the tenantry. Never a word of his father or his wife, nor of the Master, save only for a day or two, when his mind dwelt entirely in the past and he supposed himself a boy again and upon some innocent child's play with his brother. What made this the more affecting: it appeared the Master had then run some peril of his life, for there was a cry—"Oh, Jamie will be drowned—oh, save Jamie!" which he came over and over with a great deal of passion.

This, I say, was affecting, both to Mrs. Henry and myself; but the balance of my master's wanderings did him little justice. It seemed he had set out to justify his brother's calumnies; as though he was bent to prove himself a man of a dry nature, immersed in money-getting. Had I been there alone, I would not have troubled my thumb; but all the while, as I listened, I was estimating the effect on the man's wife, and telling myself that he fell lower every day. I was the one person on the surface of the globe that comprehended him, and I was bound there should be yet another. Whether he was to die there and his virtues perish; or whether he should save his days and come back to that inheritance of sorrows, his right memory, I was bound he should be heartily lamented in the one case and unaffectedly welcomed in the other, by the person he loved the most, his wife.

Finding no occasion of free speech, I bethought me at last of a kind of documentary disclosure; and for some nights, when I was off duty and should have been asleep, I gave my time to the preparation of that which I may call my budget.

But this I found to be the easiest portion of my task, and that which remained, namely, the presentation to my lady, almost more than I had fortitude to overtake. Several days I went about with my papers under my arm, spying for some juncture of talk to serve as introduction. I will not deny but that some offered; only when they did, my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth; and I think I might have been carrying about my packet till this day, had not a fortunate accident delivered me from all my hesitations. This was at night, when I was once more leaving the room, the thing not yet done, and myself in despair at my own cowardice.

"What do you carry about with you, Mr. Mackellar?" she asked. "These last days, I see you always coming in and out with the same armful."

I returned upon my steps without a word, laid the papers before her on the table, and left her to her reading.

Of what that was, I am now to give you some idea; and the best will be to reproduce a letter of my own which came first in the budget and of which (according to an excellent habitude) I have preserved the scroll. It will show too the moderation of my part in these affairs, a thing which some have called recklessly in question.

"DURRISDEER.
"1757.

"HONORED MADAM: I trust I would not step out of my place without occasion; but I see how much evil has flowed in the past to all of your noble house from that unhappy and secretive fault of reticency, and the papers on which I venture to call your attention are family papers and all highly worthy your acquaintance.

"I append a schedule with some necessary observations,

"And am,
"Honored madam,
"Your ladyship's obliged, obedient servant,
"EPHRAIM MACKELLAR.

"*Schedule of Papers.*

"A. Scroll of ten letters from Ephraim Mackellar to the Honorable James Durie, Esq., by courtesy Master of Ballantrae during the latter's residence in Paris: under dates—" (*follow the dates*)—"*Nota:* to be read in connection with B. and C.

"B. Seven original letters from the said Master of Ballantrae to the said E. Mackellar, under dates—" (*follow the dates*).

"C. Three original letters from the said Master of Ballantrae to the Honorable Henry Durie, Esq., under dates—" (*follow the dates*)—"*Nota:* given me by Mr. Henry to answer: copies of my answers A 4, A 5, and A 9 of these productions. The purport of Mr. Henry's communications, of which I can find no scroll, may be gathered from those of his unnatural brother.

"D. A correspondence, original and scroll, extending over a period of three years till January of the current year, between the said Master of Ballantrae and —— ——, Under Secretary of State; twenty-seven in all. *Nota:* found among the Master's papers."

Weary as I was with watching and distress of mind, it was impossible for me to sleep. All night long I walked in my chamber, revolving what should be the issue and sometimes repenting the temerity of my immixture in affairs so private; and with the first peep of the morning, I was at the sick-room door. Mrs. Henry had thrown open the shutters and even the window, for the temperature was mild. She looked steadfastly before her, where was nothing to see, or only the blue of the morning creeping among woods. Upon the stir of my entrance she did not so much as turn about her face: a circumstance from which I augured very ill.

"Madam," I began; and then again, "Madam"; but could make no more of it. Nor yet did Mrs. Henry come to my assistance with a word. In this pass I began gathering up the papers where they lay scattered on the table; and the first thing that struck me, their bulk appeared to have diminished. Once I ran them through, and twice; but the correspondence with the secretary of state, on which I had reckoned so much against the future, was nowhere to be found. I looked in the chimney; amid the smoldering embers black ashes of paper fluttered in the draft; and at that my timidity vanished.

"Good God, madam," cried I, in a voice not fitting for a sick-room, "good God, madam, what have you done with my papers?"

"I have burned them," said Mrs. Henry, turning about. "It is enough, it is too much, that you and I have seen them."

"This is a fine night's work that you have done!" cried I. "And all to save the reputation of a man that ate bread by the shedding of his comrades' blood, as I do by the shedding of ink."

"To save the reputation of that family in which you are a servant, Mr. Mackellar," she returned, "and for which you have already done so much."

"It is a family I will not serve much longer," I cried, "for I am driven desperate. You have stricken the sword out of my hands; you have left us all defenseless. I had always these letters I could shake over his head; and now—what is to do? We are so falsely situate, we dare not show the man the door; the country would fly on fire against us; and I had this one hold upon him—and now it is gone—now he may come back to-morrow, and we must all sit down with him to dinner, go for a stroll with him on the terrace, or take a hand at cards, of all things, to divert his leisure! No, madam; God forgive you, if he can find it in his heart; for I can not find it in mine."

"I wonder to find you so simple, Mr. Mackellar," said Mrs. Henry. "What does this man value reputation? But he knows how high we prize it; he knows we would rather die than make these letters public; and do you suppose he would not trade upon the knowledge? What you call your sword, Mr. Mackellar, and which had been one indeed against a man of any remnant of propriety, would have been but a sword of paper against him. He would smile in your face at such a threat. He stands upon his degradation, he makes that his strength; it is in vain to struggle with such characters." She cried out this last a little desperately, and then with more quiet: "No, Mr. Mackellar, I have thought upon this matter all night, and there is no way out of it. Papers or no papers, the door of this house stands open for him; he is the rightful heir, forsooth! If we sought to exclude him, all would redound against poor Henry, and I should see him stoned again upon the streets. Ah! if Henry dies, it is a different matter! They have broke the entail for their own good purposes; the estate goes to my daughter; and I shall see who sets a foot upon it. But if Henry lives, my poor Mr. Mackellar, and that man returns, we must suffer; only this time it will be together."

On the whole, I was well pleased with Mrs. Henry's attitude of mind; nor could I even deny there was some cogency in that which she advanced about the papers.

"Let us say no more about it," said I. "I can only be sorry I trusted a lady with the originals, which was an unbusiness-like proceeding at the best. As for what I said of leaving the service of the family, it was spoken with the tongue only; and you may set your mind at rest. I belong to Durrisdeer, Mrs. Henry, as if I had been born there."

I must do her the justice to say she seemed perfectly relieved; so that we began this morning, as we were to continue for so many years, on a proper ground of mutual indulgence and respect.

The same day, which was certainly predicate to joy, we observed the first signal of recovery in Mr. Henry; and about three of the following afternoon he found his mind again, recognizing me by name with the strongest evidences of affection. Mrs. Henry was also in the room, at the bed-foot; but it did not appear that he observed her. And indeed (the fever being gone) he was so weak that he made but the one effort and sank again into a lethargy. The course of his restoration was now slow but equal; every day his appetite improved; every week we were able to remark an increase both of strength and flesh; and before the end of the month he was out of bed and had even begun to be carried in his chair upon the terrace.

It was perhaps at this time that Mrs. Henry and I were the most uneasy in mind. Apprehension for his days was at an end; and a worse fear succeeded. Every day we drew consciously nearer to a day of reckoning; and the days passed on, and still there was nothing. Mr. Henry bettered in strength, he held long talks with us on a great diversity of subjects, his father came and sat with him and went again; and still there was no reference to the late tragedy or to the former troubles which had brought it on. Did he remember, and conceal his dreadful knowledge? or was the whole blotted from his mind? this was the problem that kept us watching and trembling all day when we were in his company, and held us awake at night when we were in our lonely beds. We knew not even which alternative to hope for, both appearing so unnatural and pointing so directly to an unsound brain. Once this fear offered, I observed his conduct with sedulous particularity. Something of the child he exhibited: a cheerfulness quite foreign to his previous character, an interest readily aroused, and then very tenacious, in small matters which he had heretofore despised. When he was stricken down, I was his only confidant, and I may say his only friend, and he was on terms of division with his wife; upon his recovery all was changed, the past forgotten, the wife first and even single in his thoughts. He turned to her with all his emotions like a child to its mother, and seemed secure of sympathy; called her in all his needs with something of that querulous familiarity that marks a certainty of indulgence; and I must say, in justice to the woman, he was never disappointed. To her, indeed, this changed behavior was inexpressibly affecting; and I think she felt it secretly as a reproach; so that I have seen her, in early days, escape out of the room that she might indulge herself in weeping. But to me the change appeared not natural; and viewing it along with all the rest, I began to wonder, with many head-shakings, whether his reason were perfectly erect.

As this doubt stretched over many years, endured indeed until my master's death, and clouded all our subsequent relations, I may well consider of it more at large. When he was able to resume some charge of his affairs I had many opportunities to try him with precision. There was no lack of understanding, nor yet of authority; but the old continuous interest had quite departed; he grew readily fatigued and fell to yawning; and he carried into money relations, where it is certainly out of place, a facility that bordered upon slackness. True, since we had no longer the exactions of the Master to contend against there was the less occasion to raise strictness into principle or do battle for a farthing. True again, there was nothing excessive in these relaxations, or I would have been no party to them. But the whole thing marked a change, very slight yet very perceptible; and though no man could say my master had gone at all out of his mind, no man could deny that he had drifted from his character. It was the same to the end, with his manner and appearance. Some of the heat of the fever lingered in his veins: his movements a little hurried, his speech notably more voluble, yet neither truly amiss. His whole mind stood open to happy impressions, welcoming these and making much of them; but the smallest suggestion of trouble or sorrow he received with visible impatience and dismissed again with immediate relief.

It was to this temper that he owed the felicity of his later days; and yet here it was, if anywhere, that you could call the man insane. A great part of this life consists in contemplating what we can not cure; but Mr. Henry, if he could not dismiss solicitude by an effort of the mind, must instantly and at whatever cost annihilate the cause of it; so that he played alternately the ostrich and the bull. It is to this strenuous cowardice of pain that I have to set down all the unfortunate and excessive steps of his subsequent career. Certainly this was the reason of his beating McManus, the groom, a thing so much out of all his former practise and which awakened so much comment at the time. It is to this again that I must lay the total loss of near upon two hundred pounds, more than the half of which I could have saved, if his impatience would have suffered me. But he preferred loss or any desperate extreme to a continuance of mental suffering.

All this has led me far from our immediate trouble—whether he remembered or had forgotten his late dreadful act, and if he remembered, in what light he viewed it. The truth burst upon us suddenly, and was indeed one of the chief surprises of my life. He had been several times abroad, and was now beginning to walk a little with an arm, when it chanced I should be left alone with him upon the terrace. He turned to me with a singular furtive smile, such as schoolboys use when in fault, and says he, in a private whisper and without the least preface:

"Where have you buried him?"

I could not make one sound in answer.

"Where have you buried him?" he repeated. "I want to see his grave."

I conceived I had best take the bull by the horns. "Mr. Henry," said I, "I have news to give that will rejoice you exceedingly. In all human likelihood your hands are clear of blood. I reason from certain indices, and by these it should appear your brother was not dead, but was carried in a swound on board the lugger. By now he may be perfectly recovered."

What there was in his countenance I could not read. "James?" he asked.

"Your brother James," I answered. "I would not raise a hope that may be found deceptive, but in my heart I think it very probable he is alive."

"Ah!" says Mr. Henry, and suddenly rising from his seat with more alacrity than he had yet discovered, set one finger on my breast and cried at me in a kind of screaming whisper, "Mackellar"—these were his words—"nothing can kill that man. He is not mortal. He is bound upon my back to all eternity—to all God's eternity!" says he, and sitting down again, fell upon a stubborn silence.

A day or two after, with the same secret smile, and first looking about as if to be sure we were alone, "Mackellar," said he, "when you have any intelligence be sure and let me know. We must keep an eye upon him or he will take us when we least expect."

"He will not show face here again," said I.

"Oh, yes, he will," said Mr. Henry. "Wherever I am there will he be." And again he looked all about him.

"You must not dwell upon this thought, Mr. Henry," said I.

"No," said he, "that is very good advice. We will never think of it except when you have news. And we do not know yet," he added; "he may be dead."

The manner of his saying this convinced me thoroughly of what I had scarce ventured to suspect—that so far from suffering any penitence for the attempt he did but lament his failure. This was a discovery I kept to myself, fearing it might do him a prejudice with his wife. But I might have saved myself the trouble; she had divined it for herself, and found the sentiment quite natural. Indeed, I could not but say that there were three of us all of the same mind, nor could any news have reached Durrisdeer more generally welcome than tidings of the Master's death.

This brings me to speak of the exception, my old lord.

As soon as my anxiety for my old master began to be relaxed I was aware of a change in the old gentleman, his father, that seemed to threaten mortal consequences.

His face was pale and swollen; as he sat in the chimney-side with his Latin he would drop off sleeping and the book roll in the ashes; some days he would drag his foot, others stumble in speaking. The amenity of his behavior appeared more extreme; full of excuses for the least trouble, very thoughtful for all; to myself of a most flattering civility. One day that he had sent for his lawyer and remained a long while private he met me as he was crossing the hall with painful footsteps and took me kindly by the hand. "Mr. Mackellar," said he, "I have had many occasions to set a proper value on your services, and to-day when I recast my will I have taken the freedom to name you for one of my executors. I believe you bear love enough to our house to render me this service." At that very time he passed the greater portion of his days in slumber, from which it was often difficult to rouse him; seemed to have lost all count of years, and had several times (particularly on waking) called for his wife and for an old servant whose very gravestone was now green with moss. If I had been put to my oath I must have declared he was incapable of testing, and yet there was never a will drawn more sensible in every trait, or showing a more excellent judgment both of persons and affairs.

His dissolution, though it took not very long, proceeded by infinitesimal gradations. His faculties decayed together steadily; the power of his limbs was almost gone, he was extremely deaf, his speech had sunk into mere mumblings; and yet to the end he managed to discover something of his former courtesy and kindness, pressing the hand of any that helped him, presenting me with one of his Latin books in which he had laboriously traced my name, and in a thousand ways reminding us of the greatness of that loss, which it might almost be said we had already suffered. To the end, the power of articulation returned to him in flashes; it seemed he had only forgotten the art of speech as a child forgets his lesson, and at times he would call some part of it to mind. On the last night of his life, he suddenly broke silence with these words from Virgil: *"Gnatique pratisque, alma, precor miserere,"* perfectly uttered and with a fitting accent. At the sudden clear sound of it, we started from our several occupations; but it was in vain we turned to him; he sat there silent and to all appearances fatuous. A little later, he was had to bed with more difficulty than ever before; and some time in the night, without any mortal violence, his spirit fled.

At a far later period I chanced to speak of these particulars with a doctor of medicine, a man of so high a reputation that I scruple to adduce his name. By his view of it, father and son both suffered from the same affection; the father from the strain of his unnatural sorrows. the son perhaps in the excitation of the fever, each had ruptured a vessel on the brain; and there was probably (my doctor added) some predisposition in the family to accidents of that description. The father sunk, the son recovered all the externals of a healthy man; but it is like there was some destruction in those delicate tissues where the soul resides and does her earthly business; her heavenly, I would fain hope, can not be thus obstructed by material accidents. And yet upon a more mature opinion, it matters not one jot; for He who shall pass judgment on the records of our life is the same that formed us in frailty.

The death of my old lord was the occasion of a fresh surprise to us who watched the behavior of his successor. To any considering mind the two sons had between them slain their father; and he who took the sword might be even said to have slain him with his hand. But no such thought appeared to trouble my new lord. He was becomingly grave; I could scarce say sorrowful, or only with a pleasant sorrow; talking of the dead with a regretful cheerfulness, relating old examples of his character, smiling at them with a good conscience; and when the day of the funeral came round doing the honors with exact propriety. I could perceive, besides, that he found a solid gratification in his accession to the title; the which he was punctilious in exacting.

And now there came upon the scene a new character, and one that played his part too in the story; I mean the present lord, Alexander, whose birth (17th July, 1757) filled the cup of my poor master's happiness. There was nothing then left him to wish for; nor yet leisure to wish for it. Indeed, there never was a parent so fond and doting as he showed himself. He was continually uneasy in his son's absence. Was the child abroad? the father would be watching the clouds in case it rained. Was it night? he would rise out of his bed to observe its slumbers. His conversation grew even weariful to strangers, since he talked of little but his son. In matters relating to the estate all was designed with a particular eye to Alexander; and it would be: "Let us put it in hand at once, that the wood may be grown against Alexander's majority"; or "this will fall in again handsomely for Alexander's marriage." Every day this absorption of the man's nature became more observable, with many touching and some very blameworthy particulars. Soon the child could walk abroad with him, at first on the terrace hand in hand, and afterward at large about the policies; and this grew to be my lord's chief occupation. The sound of their two voices (audible a great way off, for they spoke loud) became familiar in the neighborhood; and for my part I found it more agreeable than the sound of birds. It was pretty to see the pair returning, full of briers, and the father as flushed and sometimes as bemuddied as the child; for they were equal sharers in all sorts of boyish entertainment, digging in the beach, damming of streams, and what not; and I have seen them gaze through a fence at cattle with the same childish contemplation.

The mention of these rambles brings me to a strange scene of which I was a witness. There was one walk I never followed myself without emotion, so often had I gone there upon miserable errands, so much had there befallen against the house of Durrisdeer. But the path lay handy from all points beyond the Muckle Ross; and I was driven, although much against my will, to take my use of it perhaps once in the two months. It befell when

Mr. Alexander was of the age of seven or eight, I had some business on the far side in the morning, and entered the shrubbery on my homeward way, about nine of a bright forenoon. It was that time of year when the woods are all in their spring colors, the thorns all in flower, and the birds in the high season of their singing. In contrast to this merriment, the shrubbery was only the more sad and I the more oppressed by its associations. In this situation of spirit, it struck me disagreeably to hear voices a little way in front, and to recognize the tones of my lord and Mr. Alexander. I pushed ahead, and came presently into their view. They stood together in the open space where the duel was, my lord with his hand on his son's shoulder and speaking with some gravity. At least, as he raised his head upon my coming, I thought I could perceive his countenance to lighten.

"Ah," says he, "here comes the good Mackellar. I have just been telling Sandie the story of this place, and how there was a man whom the devil tried to kill, and how near he came to kill the devil instead."

I had thought it strange enough he should bring the child into that scene; that he should actually be discoursing of his act, passed measure. But the worst was yet to come; for he added, turning to his son: "You can ask Mackellar; he was here and saw it."

"Is it true, Mr. Mackellar?" asked the child. "And did you really see the devil?"

"I have not heard the tale," I replied; "and I am in a press of business." So far I said a little sourly, fencing with the embarrassment of the position; and suddenly the bitterness of the past and the terror of that scene by candle-light rushed in upon my mind; I bethought me that, for a difference of a second's quickness in parade, the child before me might have never seen the day; and the emotion that always fluttered round my heart in that dark shrubbery burst forth in words. "But so much is true," I cried, "that I have met the devil in these woods and seen him foiled here; blessed be God that we escaped with life —blessed be God that one stone yet stands upon another in the walls of Durrisdeer; and oh, Mr. Alexander. if ever you come by this spot, though it was a hundred years hence and you came with the gayest and the highest in the land, I would step aside and remember a bit prayer."

My lord bowed his head gravely. "Ah," says he, "Mackellar is always in the right. Come, Alexander, take your bonnet off." And with that he uncovered and held out his hand. "Oh, Lord," said he, "I thank thee, and my son thanks thee, for thy manifold great mercies. Let us have peace for a little; defend us from the evil man. Smite him, oh, Lord, upon the lying mouth!" The last broke out of him like a cry; and at that, whether remembered anger choked his utterance, or whether he perceived this was a singular sort of prayer, at least he came suddenly to a full stop; and after a moment set back his hat upon his head.

"I think you have forgot a word, my lord," said I. "'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.'"

"Ah, that is easy saying," said my lord. "That is very easy saying, Mackellar. But for me to forgive? I think I would cut a very silly figure, if I had the affectation to pretend it."

"The bairn, my lord," said I, with some severity, for I thought his expressions little fitted for the ears of children.

"Why, very true," said he. "This is dull work for a bairn. Let's go nesting."

I forget if it was the same day, but it was soon after, my lord, finding me alone, opened himself a little more on the same head.

"Mackellar," he said, "I am now a very happy man."

"I think so indeed, my lord," said I, "and the sight of it gives me a light heart."

"There is an obligation in happiness, do you not think so?" says he musingly.

"I think so indeed," says I, "and one in sorrow too. If we are not here to try to do the best, in my humble opinion, the sooner we are away the better for all parties."

"Ay, but if you were in my shoes, would you forgive him?" asks my lord.

The suddenness of the attack a little graveled me. "It is a duty laid upon us strictly," said I.

"Hut!" said he. "These are expressions! Do you forgive the man yourself?"

"Well—no!" said I. "God forgive me, I do not."

"Shake hands upon that!" cries my lord, with a kind of joviality.

"It is an ill sentiment to shake hands upon," said I, "for Christian people. I think I will give you mine on some more evangelical occasion."

This I said, smiling a little; but as for my lord, he went from the room laughing aloud.

For my lord's slavery to the child, I can find no expression adequate. He lost himself in that continual thought; business, friends, and wife being all alike forgotten or only remembered with a painful effort, like that of one struggling with a posset. It was most notable in the matter of his wife. Since I had known Durrisdeer she had been the burden of his thought and the lodestone of his eyes; and now, she was quite cast out. I have seen him come to the door of a room, look round, and pass my lady over as though she were a dog before the fire; it would be Alexander he was seeking, and my lady knew it well. I have heard him speak to her so ruggedly that I nearly found it in my heart to intervene; the cause would still be the same, that she had in some way thwarted Alexander. Without doubt this was in the nature of a judgment on my lady. Without doubt she had the tables turned upon her as only Providence can do it; she who had been cold so many years to every mark of tenderness, it was her part now to be neglected; the more praise to her that she played it well.

An odd situation resulted: that we had once more two parties in the house, and that now I was of my lady's. Not that ever I lost the love I bore my master. But for one thing, he had the less use for my society. For another, I could not but compare the case of Mr. Alexander with that of Miss Katharine; for whom my lord had never found the least attention. And for a third, I was wounded by the change he discovered to his wife, which struck me in the nature of an infidelity. I could not but admire besides the constancy and kindness she displayed. Perhaps her sentiment to my lord, as it had been founded from the first in pity, was that rather of a mother than a wife; perhaps it pleased her (if I may so say) to behold her two children so happy in each other; the more as one had suffered so unjustly in the past. But for all that, and though I could never trace in her one spark of jealousy, she must fall back for society on poor, neglected Miss Katharine; and I, on my part, came to pass my spare hours more and more with the mother and daughter. It would be easy to make too much of this division, for it was a pleasant family as families go; still the thing existed; whether my lord knew it or not, I am in doubt. I do not think he did, he was bound up so entirely in his son; but the rest of us knew it and (in a manner) suffered from the knowledge.

What troubled us most, however, was the great and growing danger to the child. My lord was his father over again; it was to be feared the son would prove a second Master.

Time has proved these fears to have been quite exaggerated. Certainly there is no more worthy gentleman to-day in Scotland than the seventh Lord Durrisdeer. Of my own exodus from his employment, it does not become me to speak, above all in a memorandum written only to justify his father.[1] . . . But our fear at the time was lest he should turn out, in the person of his son, a second edition of his brother. My lady had tried to interject some wholesome discipline; she had been glad to give that up, and now looked on with secret dismay; sometimes she even spoke of it by hints; and sometimes when there was brought to her knowledge some monstrous instance of my lord's indulgence she would betray herself in a gesture or perhaps an exclamation. As for myself, I was haunted by the thought both day and night; not so much for the child's sake as for the father's. The man had gone to sleep, he was dreaming a dream, and any rough wakening must infallibly prove mortal. That he should survive its death was inconceivable; and the fear of its dishonor made me cover my face.

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[1] [Editor's Note.—Five pages of Mr. Mackellar's MS. are here omitted. I have gathered from their perusal an impression that Mr. Mackellar, in his old age, was rather an exacting servant. Against the seventh Lord Durrisdeer (with whom, at any rate, we have no concern) nothing material is alleged.—R. L. S.]

It was this continual preoccupation that screwed me up at last to a remonstrance; a matter worthy to be narrated in detail. My lord and I sat one day at the same table upon some tedious business of detail; I have said that he had lost his former interest in such occupations; he was plainly itching to be gone, and he looked fretful, weary, and, methought, older than I had ever previously observed. I suppose it was the haggard face that put me suddenly upon my enterprise.

"My lord," said I, with my head down, and feigning to continue my occupation—"or rather let me call you again by the name of Mr. Henry, for I fear your anger and want you to think upon old times—"

"My good Mackellar!" said he; and that in tones so kindly that I had near forsook my purpose. But I called to mind that I was speaking for his good, and stuck to my colors.

"Has it never come in upon your mind what you are doing?" I asked.

"What I am doing?" he repeated. "I was never good at guessing riddles."

"What you are doing with your son," said I.

"Well," said he, with some defiance in his tone, "and what am I doing with my son?"

"Your father was a very good man," says I, straying from the direct path. "But do you think he was a wise father?"

There was a pause before he spoke, and then: "I say nothing against him," he replied. "I had the most cause perhaps; but I say nothing."

"Why, there it is," said I. "You had the cause at least. And yet your father was a good man; I never knew a better, save on the one point, nor yet a wiser. Where he stumbled, it is highly possible another man should fall. He had the two sons—"

My lord rapped suddenly and violently on the table. "What is this?" cried he. "Speak out!"

"I will, then," said I, my voice almost strangled with the thumping of my heart. "If you continue to indulge Mr. Alexander, you are following in your father's footsteps: Beware, my lord, lest (when he grows up) your son should follow in the Master's."

I had never meant to put the thing so crudely; but in the extreme of fear, there comes a brutal kind of courage, the most brutal indeed of all; and I burned my ships with that plain word. I never had the answer. When I lifted my head, my lord had risen to his feet, and the next moment he fell heavily on the floor. The fit or seizure endured not very long; he came to himself vacantly, put his hand to his head which I was then supporting, and says he, in a broken voice: "I have been ill," and a little after: "Help me!" I got him to his feet, and he stood pretty well, though he kept hold of the table. "I have been ill, Mackellar," he said again. "Something broke, Mackellar—or was going to break, and then all swam away. I think I was very angry. Never you mind, Mackellar, never you mind, my man. I wouldnae hurt a hair upon your head. Too much has come and gone. It's a certain thing between us two. But I think, Mackellar, I will go to Mrs. Henry—I think I will go to Mrs. Henry," said he, and got pretty steadily from the room, leaving me overcome with penitence.

Presently the door flew open, and my lady swept in with flashing eyes. "What is all this?" she cried. "What have you done to my husband? Will nothing teach you your position in this house? Will you never cease from making and meddling?"

"My lady," said I, "since I have been in this house, I have had plenty of hard words. For a while they were my daily diet, and I swallowed them all. As for to-day, you may call me what you please; you will never find the name hard enough for such a blunder. And yet I meant it for the best."

I told her all with ingenuity, even as it is written here; and when she had heard me out, she pondered, and I could see her animosity fall. "Yes," she said, "you meant well indeed. I have had the same thought myself, or the same temptation rather, which makes me pardon you. But, dear God, can you not understand that he can bear no more? He can bear no more!" she cried. "The cord is stretched to snapping. What matters the future, if he have one or two good days?"

"Amen," said I. "I will meddle no more. I am pleased enough that you should recognize the kindness of my meaning."

"Yes," said my lady, "but when it came to the point, I have to suppose your courage failed you; for what you said was said cruelly." She paused, looking at me; then suddenly smiled a little, and said a singular thing: "Do you know what you are, Mr. Mackellar? You are an old maid."

No more incident of any note occurred in the family until the return of that ill-starred man, the Master. But I have to place here a second extract from the memoirs of Chevalier Burke, interesting in itself and highly necessary for my purpose. It is our only sight of the Master on his Indian travels; and the first word in these pages of Secundra Dass. One fact, it is to be observed, appears here very clearly, which if we had known some twenty years ago, how many calamities and sorrows had been spared!—that Secundra Dass spoke English.

ADVENTURE OF CHEVALIER BURKE IN INDIA

(*Extracted from his memoirs*)

HERE was I, therefore, on the streets of that city, the name of which I can not call to mind, while even then I was so ill acquainted with its situation that I knew not whether to go south or north. The alert being sudden, I had run forth without shoes or stockings; my hat had been struck from my head in the mellay; my kit was in the hands of the English; I had no companion but the cipaye, no weapon but my sword, and the devil a coin in my pocket. In short I was for all the world like one of those calendars with whom Mr. Galland has made us acquainted in his elegant tales. These gentlemen, you will remember, were forever falling in with extraordinary incidents; and I was myself upon the brink of one so astonishing that I protest I can not explain it to this day.

The cipaye was a very honest man, he had served many years with the French colors, and would have let himself be cut to pieces for any of the brave countrymen of Mr. Lally. It is the same fellow (his name has quite escaped me) of whom I have narrated already a surprising instance of generosity of mind: when he found Mr. de Fessac and myself upon the ramparts, entirely overcome with liquor, and covered us with straw while the commandant was passing by. I consulted him therefore with perfect freedom. It was a fine question what to do; but we decided at last to escalade a garden wall, where we could certainly sleep in the shadow of the trees, and might perhaps find an occasion to get hold of a pair of slippers and a turban. In that part of the city we had only the difficulty of the choice, for it was a quarter consisting entirely of walled gardens, and the lanes which divided them were at that hour of the night deserted. I gave the cipaye a back, and we had soon dropped into a large enclosure full of trees. The place was soaking with the dew which, in that country, is exceedingly unwholesome, above all to whites; yet my fatigue was so extreme that I was already half asleep, when the cipaye recalled me to my senses. In the far end of the enclosure a bright light had suddenly shone out, and continued to burn steadily among the leaves. It was a circumstance highly unusual in such a place and hour; and in our situation it behooved us to proceed with some timidity. The cipaye was sent to reconnoiter, and pretty soon returned with the intelligence that we had fallen extremely amiss, for the house belonged to a white man, who was in all likelihood English.

"Faith," says I, "if there's a white man to be seen, I will have a look at him; for the Lord be praised! there are more sorts than the one."

The cipaye led me forward accordingly to a place from which I had a clear view upon the house. It was surrounded with a wide veranda; a lamp, very well trimmed, stood upon the floor of it, and on either side of the lamp there sat a man, cross-legged after the Oriental manner. Both, besides, were bundled up in muslin like two natives; and yet one of them was not only a white man, but a man very well known to me and the reader: being indeed that very Master of Ballantrae of whose gallantry and genius I have had to speak so often. Word had reached me that he was come to the Indies; though we had never met at least, and I heard little of his occupations. But sure, I had no sooner recognized him, and found myself in the arms of so old a comrade, than I supposed my tribulations were quite done. I stepped plainly forth into the light of the moon, which shone exceeding strong, and hailing Ballantrae by name, made him in a few words master of my grievous situation. He turned, started the least thing in the world, looked me fair in the face while I was speaking, and when I had done, addressed himself to his companion in the barbarous native dialect. The second person, who was of an extraordinary delicate appearance, with legs like walking-canes and fingers like the stalk of a tobacco pipe,[1] now rose to his feet.

"The sahib," says he, "understands no English language. I understand it myself, and I see you make some small mistake—oh, which may happen very often! But the sahib would be glad to know how you come in a garden."

"Ballantrae!" I cried. "Have you the damned impudence to deny me to my face?"

Ballantrae never moved a muscle, staring at me like an image in a pagoda.

"The sahib understands no English language," says the native, as glib as before. "He be glad to know how you come in a garden."

"Oh, the divil fetch him!" says I. "He would be glad to know how I come in a garden, would he? Well now, my dear man, just have the civility to tell the sahib, with my kind love, that we are two soldiers here whom he never met and never heard of, but the cipaye is a broth of a boy, and I am a broth of a boy myself; and if we don't get a full meal of meat, and a turban, and slippers, and the value of a gold mohur in small change as a matter of convenience, my friend, I could lay my finger on a garden where there is going to be trouble."

They carried their comedy so far as to converse awhile in Hindustani; and then says the Hindu, with the same smile, but sighing as if he were tired of the repetition:

"The sahib would be glad to know how you come in a garden."

"Is that the way of it?" says I, and laying my hand on my sword-hilt, I bade the cipaye draw.

Ballantrae's Hindu, still smiling, pulled out a pistol from his bosom, and though Ballantrae himself never moved a muscle, I knew him well enough to be sure he was prepared.

"The sahib thinks you better go away," says the Hindu.

Well, to be plain, it was what I was thinking myself;

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[1] *Note by Mr. Mackellar.*—Plainly Secundra Dass.—E. McK.

for the report of a pistol would have been, under Providence, the means of hanging the pair of us.

"Tell the sahib, I consider him no gentleman," says I, and turned away with a gesture of contempt.

I was not gone three steps when the voice of the Hindu called me back. "The sahib would be glad to know if you are a damn low Irishman," says he; and at the words Ballantrae smiled and bowed very low.

"What is that?" says I.

"The sahib say you ask your friend Mackellar," says the Hindu. "The sahib he cry quits."

"Tell the sahib I will give him a cure for the Scots fiddle when next we meet," cried I.

The pair were still smiling as I left.

There is little doubt some flaws may be picked in my own behavior; and when a man, however gallant, appeals to posterity with an account of his exploits, he must almost certainly expect to share the fate of Cæsar and Alexander, to meet with some detractors. But there is one thing that can never be laid at the door of Francis Burke: he never turned his back on a friend. . . .

(Here follows a passage which the Chevalier Burke has been at the pains to delete before sending me his manuscript. Doubtless it was some very natural complaint of what he supposed to be an indiscretion on my part; though, indeed, I can call none to mind. Perhaps Mr. Henry was less guarded; or it is just possible the Master found the means to examine my correspondence, and himself read the letter from Troyes: in revenge for which this cruel jest was perpetrated on Mr. Burke in his extreme necessity. The Master, for all his wickedness, was not without some natural affection; I believe he was sincerely attached to Mr. Burke in the beginning; but the thought of treachery dried up the springs of his very shallow friendship, and his detestable nature appeared naked.—E. McK.)

THE ENEMY IN THE HOUSE

IT IS a strange thing that I should be at a stick for a date—the date, besides, of an incident that changed the very nature of my life, and sent us all into foreign lands. But the truth is I was stricken out of all my habitudes, and find my journals very ill redd-up,[1] the day not indicated sometimes for a week or two together, and the whole fashion of the thing like that of a man near desperate. It was late in March at least, or early in April, 1764. I had slept heavily and wakened with a premonition of some evil to befall. So strong was this upon my spirit that I hurried downstairs in my shirt and breeches, and my hand (I remember) shook upon the rail. It was a cold, sunny morning with a thick white frost; the blackbirds sung exceeding sweet and loud about the house of Durrisdeer, and there was a noise of the sea in all the chambers. As I came by the door of the hall another sound arrested me, of voices talking. I drew nearer and stood like a man dreaming. Here was certainly a human voice, and that in my own master's house, and yet I knew it not; certainly human speech, and that in my native land; and yet listen as I pleased, I could not catch one syllable. An old tale started up in my mind of a fairy wife (or perhaps only a wandering stranger), that came to the place of my fathers some generations back, and stayed the matter of a week, talking often in a tongue that signified nothing to the hearers; and went again as she had come, under cloud of night, having not so much as a name behind her. A little fear I had, but more curiosity; and I opened the hall door and entered.

The supper things still lay upon the table; the shutters were still closed, although day peeped in the divisions; and the great room was lighted only with a single taper and some lurching reverberation of the fire. Close in the chimney sat two men. The one that was wrapped in a cloak and wore boots, I knew at once: it was the bird of ill omen back again. Of the other, who was set close to the red embers, and made up into a bundle like a mummy, I could but see that he was an alien, of a darker hue than any man of Europe, very frailly built, with a singular tall forehead and a secret eye. Several bundles and a small valise were on the floor; and to judge by the smallness of this luggage, and by the condition of the Master's boots, grossly patched by some unscrupulous country cobbler, evil had not prospered.

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[1] Ordered.

He rose upon my entrance; our eyes crossed; and I know not why it should have been, but my courage rose like a lark on a May morning.

"Ha!" said I, "is this you?"—and I was pleased with the unconcern of my own voice.

"It is even myself, worthy Mackellar," says the Master.

"This time you have brought the black dog visibly upon your back," I continued.

"Referring to Secundra Dass?" asked the Master. "Let me present you. He is a native gentleman of India."

"Hum!" said I. "I am no great lover either of you or your friend, Mr. Bally. But I will let a little daylight in and have a look at you." And so saying, I undid the shutters of the eastern window.

By the light of the morning I could perceive the man was changed. Later, when we were all together, I was more struck to see how lightly time had dealt with him, but the first glance was otherwise.

"You are getting an old man," said I.

A shade came upon his face. "If you could see yourself," said he, "you would perhaps not dwell upon the topic."

"Hut!" I returned; "old age is nothing to me. I think I have been always old, and I am now, I thank God, better known and more respected. It is not every one that can say that, Mr. Bally! The lines in *your* brow are calamities; your life begins to close in upon you like a prison; death will soon be rapping at the door, and I see not from what source you are to draw your consolations."

Here the Master addressed himself to Secundra Dass in Hindustani, from which I gathered (I freely confess, with a high degree of pleasure) that my remarks annoyed him. All this while, you may be sure, my mind had been busy upon other matters even while I rallied my enemy, and chiefly as to how I should communicate secretly and quickly with my lord. To this, in the breathing-space now given me, I turned all the forces of my mind, when, suddenly shifting my eyes, I was aware of the man himself standing in the doorway, and to all appearance quite composed. He had no sooner met my looks than he stepped across the threshold. The Master heard him coming, and advanced upon the other side; about four feet apart these brothers came to a full pause and stood exchanging steady looks, and then my lord smiled, bowed a little forward and turned briskly away.

"Mackellar," says he, "we must see to breakfast for these travelers."

It was plain the Master was a trifle disconcerted, but he assumed the more impudence of speech and manner. "I am as hungry as a hawk," says he. "Let it be something good, Henry."

My lord turned to him with the same hard smile. "Lord Durrisdeer," says he.

"Oh, never in the family!" returned the Master.

"Every one in this house renders me my proper title," says my lord. "If it please you to make an exception I will leave you to consider what appearance it will bear to strangers, and whether it may not be translated as an effect of impotent jealousy."

I could have clapped my hands together with delight: the more so as my lord left no time for any answer, but bidding me with a sign to follow him, went straight out of the hall.

"Come quick," says he; "we have to sweep vermin from the house." And he sped through the passage with so swift a step that I could scarce keep up with him straight to the door of John Paul, the which he opened without summons and walked in. John was to all appearance sound asleep, but my lord made no pretense of waking him.

"John Paul," said he, speaking as quietly as ever I heard him, "you served my father long or I would pack you from the house like a dog. If in half an hour's time I find you gone you shall continue to receive your wages in Edinburgh. If you linger here or in St. Bride's—the old man, old servant and altogether—I shall find some very astonishing way to make you smart for your disloyalty. Up and begone. The door you let them in by will serve for your departure. I do not choose my son shall see your face again."

"I am rejoiced to find you bear the thing so quietly," said I when we were forth again by ourselves.

"Quietly!" cries he, and put my hand suddenly against his heart, which struck upon his bosom like a sledge.

At this revelation I was filled with wonder and fear. There was no constitution could bear so violent a strain—his least of all that was unhinged already—and I decided in my mind that we must bring this monstrous situation to an end.

"It would be well, I think, if I took word to my lady," said I. Indeed, he should have gone himself, but I counted (not in vain) on his indifference.

"Ay," says he, "do. I will hurry breakfast; we must all appear at the table, even Alexander; it must appear we are untroubled."

I ran to my lady's room, and with no preparatory cruelty disclosed my news.

"My mind was long ago made up," said she. "We must make our packets secretly to-day and leave secretly to-night. Thank Heaven, we have another house! The first ship that sails shall bear us to New York."

"And what of him?" I asked.

"We leave him Durrisdeer," she cried. "Let him work his pleasure upon that."

"Not so, by your leave," said I. "There shall be a dog at his heels that can hold fast. Bed he shall have, and board, and a horse to ride upon, if he behave himself; but the keys (if you think well of it, my lady) shall be left in the hands of one Mackellar. There will be good care taken; trust him for that."

"Mr. Mackellar," she cried, "I thank you for that thought! All shall be left in your hands. If we must go into a savage country, I bequeath it to you to take our vengeance. Send Macconochie to St. Bride's, to arrange privately for horses and to call the lawyer. My lord must leave procuration."

At that moment my lord came to the door, and we opened our plan to him.

"I will never hear of it," he cried; "he would think I feared him. I will stay in my own house, please God, until I die. There lives not the man can beard me out of it. Once and for all, here I am and here I stay, in spite of all the devils in hell." I can give no idea of the vehemency of his words and utterance; but we both stood aghast, and I in particular, who had been a witness of his former self-restraint.

My lady looked at me with an appeal that went to my heart and recalled me to my wits. I made her a private sign to go, and, when my lord and I were alone, went up to him where he was racing to and fro in one end of the room like a half lunatic, and set my hand firmly on his shoulder.

"My lord," says I, "I am going to be the plaindealer once more; if for the last time, so much the better, for I am grown weary of the part."

"Nothing will change me," he answered. "God forbid I should refuse to hear you; but nothing will change me." This he said firmly, with no signal of the former violence, which already raised my hopes.

"Very well," said I. "I can afford to waste my breath." I pointed to a chair, and he sat down and looked at me. "I can remember a time when my lady very much neglected you," said I.

"I never spoke of it while it lasted," returned my lord, with a high flush of color; "and it is all changed now."

"Do you know how much?" I said. "Do you know how much it is all changed? The tables are turned, my lord! It is my lady that now courts you for a word, a look, ay, and courts you in vain. Do you know with whom she passes her days while you are out gallivanting in the policies? My lord, she is glad to pass them with a certain dry old grieve[2] of the name of Ephraim Mackellar; and I think you may be able to remember what that means, for I am the more in a mistake or you were once driven to the same company yourself."

"Mackellar!" cries my lord, getting to his feet. "Oh, my God, Mackellar!"

"It is neither the name of Mackellar nor the name of God that can change the truth," said I; "and I am telling you the fact. Now, for you, that suffered so much, to deal out the same suffering to another, is that the part of any Christian? But you are so swallowed up in your new friend that the old are all forgotten. They are all clean vanished from your memory. And yet they stood by you at the darkest; my lady not the least. And does my lady ever cross your mind? Does it ever cross your mind what she went through that night?—or what manner of a wife she has been to you thenceforward?—or in what kind of a position she finds herself to-day? Never. It is your pride to stay and face him out, and she must stay along with him. Oh, my lord's pride—that's the great affair! And yet she is the woman, and you are a great, hulking man! She is the woman that you swore to protect; and, more betoken, the own mother of that son of yours!"

"You are speaking very bitterly, Mackellar," said he; "but, the Lord knows, I fear you are speaking very true. I have not proved worthy of my happiness. Bring my lady back."

My lady was waiting near at hand to learn the issue. When I brought her in, my lord took a hand of each of us and laid them both upon his bosom. "I have had two friends in my life," said he. "All the comfort ever I had, it came from one or other. When you two are in a mind, I think I would be an ungrateful dog—" He shut his mouth very hard, and looked on us with swimming eyes. "Do what ye like with me," says he, "only don't think—" He stopped again. "Do what ye please with me. God knows I love and honor you." And dropping our two hands, he turned his back and went and gazed out of the window. But my lady ran after, calling his name, and threw herself upon his neck in a passion of weeping.

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[2] Land steward.

I went out and shut the door behind me, and stood and thanked God from the bottom of my heart.

At the breakfast board, according to my lord's design, we were all met. The Master had by that time plucked off his patched boots and made a toilet suitable to the hour; Secundra Dass was no longer bundled up in wrappers, but wore a decent plain black suit, which misbecame him strangely; and the pair were at the great window looking forth, when the family entered. They turned; and the black man (as they had already named him in the house) bowed almost to his knees, but the Master was for running forward like one of the family. My lady stopped him, courtesying low from the far end of the hall, and keeping her children at her back. My lord was a little in front: so there were the three cousins of Durrisdeer face to face. The hand of time was very legible on all. I seemed to read in their changed faces a *memento mori;* and what affected me still more, it was the wicked man that bore his years the handsomest. My lady was quite transfigured into the matron, a becoming woman for the head of a great tableful of children and dependents. My lord was grown slack in his limbs; he stooped; he walked with a running motion, as though he had learned again from Mr. Alexander; his face was drawn; it seemed a trifle longer than of old; and it wore at times a smile very singularly mingled, and which (in my eyes) appeared both bitter and pathetic. But the Master still bore himself erect, although perhaps with effort; his brow barred about the center with imperious lines, his mouth set as for command. He had all the gravity and something of the splendor of Satan in the "Paradise Lost." I could not help but see the man with admiration, and was only surprised that I saw him with so little fear.

But indeed (as long as we were at the table) it seemed as if his authority were quite vanished and his teeth all drawn. We had known him a magician that controlled the elements, and here he was, transformed into an ordinary gentleman, chatting like his neighbors at the breakfast board. For now the father was dead, and my lord and lady reconciled, in what ear was he to pour his calumnies? It came upon me in a kind of vision how hugely I had overrated the man's subtlety. He had his malice still, he was false as ever; and, the occasion being gone that made his strength, he sat there impotent; he was still the viper, but now spent his venom on a file. Two more thoughts occurred to me while yet we sat at breakfast: the first, that he was abashed—I had almost said distressed—to find his wickedness quite unavailing; the second, that perhaps my lord was in the right, and we did amiss to fly from our dismasted enemy. But my poor master's leaping heart came in my mind, and I remembered it was for his life we played the coward.

When the meal was over, the Master followed me to my room, and taking a chair (which I had never offered him), asked me what was to be done with him.

"Why, Mr. Bally," said I, "the house will still be open to you for a time."

"For a time?" says he. "I do not know if I quite take your meaning."

"It is plain enough," said I. "We keep you for our reputation; as soon as you shall have publicly disgraced yourself by some of your misconduct, we shall pack you forth again."

"You are become an impudent rogue," said the Master, bending his brows at me dangerously.

"I learned in a good school," I returned. "And you must have perceived yourself that with my old lord's death your power is quite departed. I do not fear you now, Mr. Bally; I think even—God forgive me—that I take a certain pleasure in your company."

He broke out in a burst of laughter, which I clearly saw to be assumed.

"I have come with empty pockets," says he after a pause.

"I do not think there will be any money going," I replied. "I would advise you not to build on that."

"I shall have something to say on that point," he returned.

"Indeed?" said I. "I have not a guess what it will be, then."

"Oh, you affect confidence," said the Master. "I have still one strong position—that you people fear a scandal, and I enjoy it."

"Pardon me, Mr. Bally," says I. "We do not in the least fear a scandal against you."

He laughed again. "You have been studying repartee," he said. "But speech is very easy, and sometimes very deceptive. I warn you fairly: you will find me vitriol in the house. You would do wiser to pay money down, and see my back." And with that he waved his hand to me and left the room.

A little after my lord came with the lawyer, Mr. Carlyle; a bottle of old wine was brought, and we all had a glass before we fell to business. The necessary deeds were then prepared and executed, and the Scotch estates made over in trust to Mr. Carlyle and myself.

"There is one point, Mr. Carlyle," said my lord, when these affairs had been adjusted, "on which I wish that you would do us justice. This sudden departure coinciding with my brother's return will be certainly commented on. I wish you would discourage any conjunction of the two."

"I will make a point of it, my lord," said Mr. Carlyle. "The Mas—Mr. Bally does not then accompany you?"

"It is a point I must approach," said my lord. "Mr. Bally remains at Durrisdeer under the care of Mr. Mackellar; and I do not mean that he shall even know our destination."

"Common report, however—" began the lawyer.

"Ah, but Mr. Carlyle, this is to be a secret quite among ourselves," interrupted my lord. "None but you and Mackellar are to be made acquainted with my movements."

"And Mr. Bally stays here? Quite so," said Mr. Carlyle. "The powers you leave—" then he broke off again. "Mr. Mackellar, we have a rather heavy weight upon us."

"No doubt, sir," said I.

"No doubt," said he. "Mr. Bally will have no voice?"

"He will have no voice," said my lord, "and I hope no influence. Mr. Bally is not a good adviser."

"I see," said the lawyer. "By the way, has Mr. Bally means?"

"I understand him to have nothing," replied my lord. "I give him table, fire, and candle in this house."

"And in the matter of an allowance? If I am to share the responsibility, you will see how highly desirable it is that I should understand your views," said the lawyer. "On the question of an allowance?"

"There will be no allowance," said my lord. "I wish Mr. Bally to live very private. We have not always been gratified with his behavior."

"And in the matter of money," I added, "he has shown himself an infamous bad husband. Glance your eye upon that document, Mr. Carlyle, where I have brought together the different sums the man has drawn from the estate in the last fifteen or twenty years. The total is pretty."

Mr. Carlyle made the motion of whistling. "I had no guess of this," said he. "Excuse me once more, my lord, if I appear to push you; but it is really desirable I should penetrate your intentions: Mr. Mackellar might die, when I should find myself alone upon this trust. Would it not be rather your lordship's preference that Mr. Bally should —ahem—should leave the country?"

My lord looked at Mr. Carlyle. "Why do you ask that?" said he.

"I gather, my lord, that Mr. Bally is not a comfort to his family," says the lawyer with a smile.

My lord's face became suddenly knotted. "I wish he was in hell," cried he, and filled himself a glass of wine, but with a hand so tottering that he spilled the half into his bosom. This was the second time that, in the midst of the most regular and wise behavior, his animosity had spurted out. It startled Mr. Carlyle, who observed my lord thenceforth with covert curiosity, and to me it restored the certainty that we were acting for the best in view of my lord's health and reason.

Except for this explosion, the interview was very successfully conducted. No doubt Mr. Carlyle would talk; as lawyers do, little by little. We could thus feel we had laid the foundations of a better feeling in the country; and the man's own misconduct would certainly complete what we had begun. Indeed, before his departure, the lawyer showed us there had already gone abroad some glimmerings of the truth.

"I should perhaps explain to you, my lord," said he, pausing, with his hat in his hand, "that I have not been altogether surprised with your lordship's dispositions in the case of Mr. Bally. Something of this nature oozed out when he was last in Durrisdeer. There was some talk of a woman at St. Bride's to whom you had behaved extremely handsome, and Mr. Bally with no small degree of cruelty. There was the entail again, which was much controverted. In short, there was no want of talk, back and forward; and some of our wiseacres took up a strong opinion. I remained in suspense, as became one of my cloth; but Mr. Mackellar's docket here has finally opened my eyes. I do not think, Mr. Mackellar, that you and I will give him that much rope."

The rest of that important day passed prosperously through. It was our policy to keep the enemy in view, and I took my turn to be his watchman with the rest. I think his spirits rose as he perceived us to be so attentive: and I know that mine insensibly declined. What chiefly daunted me was the man's singular dexterity to worm himself into our troubles. You may have felt (after a horse accident) the hand of a bone-setter artfully divide and interrogate the muscles, and settle strongly on the injured place? It was so with the Master's tongue that was so cunning to question, and his eyes that were so quick to observe. I seemed to have said nothing, and yet to have let all out. Before I knew where I was, the man was condoling with me on my lord's neglect of my lady and myself, and his hurtful indulgence to his son. On this last point I perceived him (with panic fear) to return repeatedly. The boy had displayed a certain shrinking from his uncle; it was strong in my mind his father had been fool enough to indoctrinate the same, which was no wise beginning: and when I looked upon the man before me, still so handsome, so apt a speaker, with so great a variety of fortunes to relate, I saw he was the very personage to captivate a boyish fancy.

John Paul had left only that morning; it was not to be supposed he had been altogether dumb upon his favorite subject: so that here would be Mr. Alexander in the part of Dido, with a curiosity inflamed to hear; and there would be the Master like a diabolical Æneas, full of matter the most pleasing in the world to any youthful ear, such as battles, sea disasters, flights, the forests of the west, and (since his later voyage) the ancient cities of the Indies. How cunningly these baits might be employed, and what an empire might be so founded, little by little, in the mind of any boy, stood obviously clear to me. There was no inhibition, so long as the man was in the house, that would be strong enough to hold these two apart; for if it be hard to charm serpents, it is no very difficult thing to cast a glamour on a little chip of manhood not very long in breeches. I recalled an ancient sailorman who dwelt in a lone house beyond the Figgate Whins (I believe he called it after Portobello), and how the boys would troop out of Leith on a Saturday, and sit and listen to his swearing tales, as thick as crows about a carrion: a thing I often remarked as I went by, a young student, on my own more meditative holiday diversion. Many of these boys went, no doubt, in the face of an express command; many feared and even hated the old brute of whom they made their hero; and I have seen them flee from him when he was tipsy, and stone him when he was drunk. And yet there they came each Saturday! How much more easily would a boy like Mr. Alexander fall under the influence of a high-looking, high-spoken gentleman adventurer who should conceive the fancy to entrap him; and the influence gained, how easy to employ it for the child's perversion!

I doubt if our enemy had named Mr. Alexander three times, before I perceived which way his mind was aiming—all this train of thought and memory passed in one pulsation through my own—and you may say I started back as though an open hole had gaped across a pathway. Mr. Alexander: there was the weak point, there was the Eve in our perishable paradise; and the serpent was already hissing on the trail.

I promise you I went the more heartily about the preparations; my last scruple gone, the danger of delay written before me in huge characters. From that moment forth, I seem not to have sat down or breathed. Now I would be at my post with the Master and his Indian; now in the garret buckling a valise; now sending forth Macconochie by the side postern and the wood-path to bear it to the trysting-place; and again, snatching some words of counsel with my lady. This was the *verso* of our life in Durrisdeer that day; but on the *recto* all appeared quite settled, as of a family at home in its paternal seat; and what perturbation may have been observable the Master would set down to the blow of his unlooked-for coming and the fear he was accustomed to inspire.

Supper went creditably off, cold salutations passed, and the company trooped to their respective chambers. I attended the Master to the last. We had put him next door to his Indian, in the north wing; because that was the most distant and could be severed from the body of the house with doors. I saw he was a kind friend or a good master (whichever it was) to his Secundra Dass: seeing to his comfort; mending the fire with his own hand, for the Indian complained of cold; inquiring as to the rice on which the stranger made his diet; talking with him pleasantly in the Hindustani, while I stood by, my candle in my hand, and affected to be overcome with slumber. At length the Master observed my signals of distress. "I perceive," says he, "that you have all your ancient habits: early to bed and early to rise. Yawn yourself away!"

Once in my own room, I made the customary motions of undressing, so that I might time myself; and when the cycle was complete, set my tinder-box ready and blew out my taper. The matter of an hour afterward I made a light again, put on my shoes of list that I had worn by my lord's sick-bed, and set forth into the house to call the voyagers. All were dressed and waiting—my lord, my lady, Miss Katharine, Mr. Alexander, my lady's woman Christie; and I observed the effect of secrecy even upon quite innocent persons, that one after another showed in the chink of the door a face as white as paper. We slipped out of the side postern into a night of darkness, scarce broken by a star or two; so that at first we groped and stumbled and fell among the bushes. A few hundred yards up the wood-path Macconochie was waiting us with a great lantern; so the rest of the way we went easy enough, but still in a kind of guilty silence. A little beyond the abbey the path debouched on the main road; and some quarter of a mile further, at the place called Eagles, where the moors begin, we saw the lights of the two carriages stand shining by the wayside. Scarce a word or two was uttered at our parting, and these regarded business; a silent grasping of hands, a turning of faces aside, and the thing was over; the horses broke into a trot, the lamplight sped like will-o'-the-wisp upon the broken moorland, it dipped beyond Stony Brae; and there were Macconochie and I alone with our lantern on the road. There was one thing more to wait for; and that was the reappearance of the coach upon Cartmore. It seems they must have pulled up upon the summit, looked back for a last time, and seen our lantern not yet moved away from the place of separation. For a lamp was taken from a carriage, and waved three times up and down by way of a farewell. And then they were gone indeed, having looked their last on the kind roof of Durrisdeer, their faces toward a barbarous country. I never knew before the greatness of that vault of night in which we two poor serving-men, the one old and the one elderly, stood for the first time deserted; I had never felt before my own dependency upon the countenance of others. The sense of isolation burned in my bowels like a fire. It seemed that we who remained at home were the true exiles; and that Durrisdeer, and Solwayside, and all that made my country native, its air good to me, and its language welcome, had gone forth and was far over the sea with my old masters.

The remainder of that night I paced to and fro on the smooth highway, reflecting on the future and the past. My thoughts, which at first dwelled tenderly on those who were just gone, took a more manly temper as I considered what remained for me to do. Day came upon the inland mountain-tops, and the fowls began to cry and the smoke of homesteads to arise in the brown bosom of the moors, before I turned my face homeward and went down the path to where the roof of Durrisdeer shone in the morning by the sea.

At the customary hour I had the Master called, and awaited his coming in the hall with a quiet mind. He looked about him at the empty room and the three covers set.

"We are a small party," said he. "How comes that?"

"This is the party to which we must grow accustomed," I replied.

He looked at me with sudden sharpness. "What is all this?" said he.

"You and I and your friend Mr. Dass are now all the company," I replied. "My lord, my lady, and the children are gone upon a voyage."

"Upon my word!" said he. "Can this be possible? I have indeed fluttered your Volscians in Corioli! But this is no reason why our breakfast should go cold. Sit down, Mr. Mackellar, if you please"—taking, as he spoke, the head of the table, which I had designed to occupy myself—"and as we eat, you can give me the details of this evasion."

I could see he was more affected than his language carried, and I determined to equal him in coolness. "I was about to ask you to take the head of the table," said I; "for though I am now thrust into the position of your host, I could never forget that you were, after all, a member of the family."

For a while he played the part of entertainer, giving directions to Macconochie, who received them with an evil grace, and attending specially upon Secundra. "And where has my good family withdrawn to?" he asked carelessly.

"Ah, Mr. Bally, that is another point!" said I. "I have no orders to communicate their destination."

"To me," he corrected.

"To any one," said I.

"It is the less pointed," said the Master; *"c'est de bon ton:* my brother improves as he continues. And I, dear Mr. Mackellar?"

"You will have bed and board, Mr. Bally," said I. "I am permitted to give you the run of the cellar, which is pretty reasonably stocked. You have only to keep well with me, which is no very difficult matter, and you shall want neither for wine nor a saddle-horse."

He made an excuse to send Macconochie from the room.

"And for money?" he inquired. "Have I to keep well with my good friend Mackellar for my pocket-money also? This is a pleasing return to the principles of boyhood."

"There was no allowance made," said I; "but I will take it on myself to see you are supplied in moderation."

"In moderation?" he repeated. "And you will take it on yourself?" He drew himself up and looked about the hall at the dark row of portraits. "In the name of my ancestors, I thank you," says he; and then, with a return to irony: "But there must certainly be an allowance for Secundra Dass?" he said. "It is not possible they have omitted that."

"I will make a note of it and ask instructions when I write," said I.

And he, with a sudden change of manner, and leaning forward with an elbow on the table: "Do you think this entirely wise?"

"I execute my orders, Mr. Bally," said I.

"Profoundly modest," said the Master; "perhaps not equally ingenuous. You told me yesterday my power was fallen with my father's death. How comes it, then, that a peer of the realm flees under cloud of night out of a house in which his fathers have stood several sieges? that he conceals his address, which must be a matter of concern to his gracious majesty and to the whole republic? and that he should leave me in possession, and under the paternal charge of his invaluable Mackellar? This smacks to me of a very considerable and genuine apprehension." I sought to interrupt him with some not very truthful denegation; but he waved me down and pursued his speech.

"I say it smacks of it," he said, "but I will go beyond that, for I think the apprehension grounded. I came to this house with some reluctancy. In view of the manner of my last departure, nothing but necessity could have induced me to return. Money, however, is that which I must have. You will not give with a good grace; well, I have the power to force it from you. Inside of a week, without leaving Durrisdeer, I will find out where these fools are fled to. I will follow; and when I have run my quarry down I will drive a wedge into that family that shall once more burst it into shivers. I shall see then whether my Lord Durrisdeer" (said with indescribable scorn and rage) "will choose to buy my absence; and you will all see whether, by that time, I decide for profit or revenge."

I was amazed to hear the man so open. The truth is, he was consumed with anger at my lord's successful flight, felt himself to figure as a dupe, and was in no humor to weigh language.

"Do you consider this entirely wise?" said I, copying his words.

"These twenty years I have lived by my poor wisdom," he answered, with a smile that seemed almost foolish in its vanity.

"And come out a beggar in the end," said I, "if beggar be a strong enough word for it."

"I would have you observe, Mr. Mackellar," cried he, with a sudden, imperious heat in which I could not but admire him, "that I am scrupulously civil; copy me in that, and we shall be the better friends."

Throughout this dialogue I had been incommoded by the observation of Secundra Dass. Not one of us, since the first word, had made a feint of eating; our eyes were in each other's faces—you might say, in each other's bosoms; and those of the Indian troubled me with a certain changing brightness, as of comprehension. But I brushed the fancy aside; telling myself once more he understood no English; only, from the gravity of both voices and the occasional scorn and anger in the Master's, smelled out there was something of import in the wind.

For the matter of three weeks we continued to live together in the house of Durrisdeer, the beginning of that most singular chapter of my life—what I must call my intimacy with the Master. At first he was somewhat changeable in his behavior; now civil, now returning to his old manner of flouting me to my face; and in both I met him half-way. Thanks be to Providence, I had now no measure to keep with the man; and I was never afraid of black brows, only of naked swords. So that I found a certain entertainment in these bouts of incivility, and was not always ill-inspired in my rejoinders. At last (it was at supper) I had a droll expression that entirely vanquished him. He laughed again and again; and "Who would have guessed," he cried, "that this old wife had any wit under his petticoats?"

"It is no wit, Mr. Bally," said I; "a dry Scot's humor, and something of the driest." And indeed I never had the least pretension to be thought a wit.

From that hour he was never rude with me, but all passed between us in a manner of pleasantry. One of our chief times of daffing[3] was when he required a horse, another bottle, or some money; he would approach me then after the manner of a schoolboy, and I would carry it on by way of being his father; on both sides, with an infinity of mirth. I could not but perceive that he thought more of me, which tickled that poor part of mankind, the vanity. He dropped besides (I must suppose unconsciously) into a manner that was not only familiar, but even friendly; and this, on the part of one who had so long detested me, I found the more insidious. He went little abroad; sometimes even refusing invitations. "No," he would say, "what do I care for these thick-headed bonnet-lairds? I will stay at home, Mackellar; and we shall share a bottle quietly and have one of our good talks." And indeed mealtime at Durrisdeer must have been a delight to any one,

[3] Fooling.

by reason of the brilliancy of the discourse. He would often express wonder at his former indifference to my society. "But, you see," he would add, "we were upon opposite sides. And so we are to-day; but let us never speak of that. I would think much less of you if you were not stanch to your employer." You are to consider, he seemed to me quite impotent for any evil; and how it is a most engaging form of flattery when (after many years) tardy justice is done to a man's character and parts. But I have no thought to excuse myself. I was to blame; I let him cajole me; and, in short, I think the watch-dog was going sound asleep, when he was suddenly aroused.

I should say the Indian was continually traveling to and fro in the house. He never spoke, save in his own dialect and with the Master; walked without sound; and was always turning up where you would least expect him fallen into a deep abstraction, from which he would start (upon your coming) to mock you with one of his groveling obeisances. He seemed so quiet, so frail, and so wrapped in his own fancies, that I came to pass him over without much regard, or even to pity him for a harmless exile from his country. And yet without doubt the creature was still eavesdropping; and without doubt it was through his stealth and my security that our secret reached the Master.

It was one very wild night, after supper, and when we had been making more than usually merry, that the blow fell on me.

"This is all very fine," says the Master, "but we should do better to be buckling our valise."

"Why so?" I cried. "Are you leaving?"

"We are all leaving to-morrow in the morning," said he. "For the port of Glasgow first; thence for the province of New York."

I suppose I must have groaned aloud.

"Yes," he continued, "I boasted; I said a week, and it has taken me near twenty days. But never mind; I shall make it up; I will go the faster."

"Have you the money for this voyage?" I asked.

"Dear and ingenuous personage, I have," said he. "Blame me, if you choose, for my duplicity; but while I have been wringing shillings from my daddy, I had a stock of my own put by against a rainy day. You will pay for your own passage, if you choose to accompany us on our flank march; I have enough for Secundra and myself, but not more; enough to be dangerous, not enough to be generous. There is, however, an outside seat upon the chaise which I will let you have upon a moderate commutation; so that the whole menagerie can go together, the house-dog, the monkey, and the tiger."

"I go with you," said I.

"I count upon it," said the Master. "You have seen me foiled, I mean you shall see me victorious. To gain that, I will risk wetting you like a sop in this wild weather."

"And at least," I added, "you know very well you could not throw me off."

"Not easily," said he. "You put your finger on the point with your usual excellent good sense. I never fight with the inevitable."

"I suppose it is useless to appeal to you," said I.

"Believe me, perfectly," said he.

"And yet if you would give me time, I could write—" I began.

"And what would be my Lord Durrisdeer's answer?" asks he.

"Ay," said I, "that is the rub."

"And at any rate, how much more expeditious that I should go myself!" says he. "But all this is quite a waste of breath. At seven to-morrow the chaise will be at the door. For I start from the door, Mackellar; I do not skulk through woods and take my chaise upon the wayside—shall we say, at Eagles?"

My mind was now thoroughly made up. "Can you spare me a quarter of an hour at St. Bride's?" said I. "I have a little necessary business with Carlyle."

"An hour, if you prefer," said he. "I do not seek to deny that the money for your seat is an object to me; and you could always get the first to Glasgow with saddle-horses."

"Well," said I, "I never thought to leave old Scotland."

"It will brisken you up," says he.

"This will be an ill journey for some one," I said. "I think, sir, for you. Something speaks in my bosom; and so much it says plain, That this is an ill-omened journey."

"If you take to prophecy," says he, "listen to that."

There came up a violent squall off the open Solway, and the rain was dashed on the great windows.

"Do ye ken what that bodes, warlock?" said he, in a broad accent; "that there'll be a man Mackellar unco sick at sea."

When I got to my chamber I sat there under a painful excitation, hearkening to the turmoil of the gale which struck full upon that gable of the house. What with the pressure on my spirits, the eldritch cries of the wind among the turret tops, and the perpetual trepidation of the masoned house, sleep fled my eyelids utterly. I sat by my taper, looking on the black panes of the window where the storm appeared continually on the point of bursting in its entrance; and upon that empty field I beheld a perspective of consequences that made the hair to rise upon my scalp. The child corrupted, the home broken up, my master dead or worse than dead, my mistress plunged in desolation—all these I saw before me painted brightly on the darkness; and the outcry of the wind appeared to mock at my inaction.

MR. MACKELLAR'S JOURNEY WITH THE MASTER

THE chaise came to the door in a strong drenching mist. We took our leave in silence: the house of Durrisdeer standing with drooping gutters and windows closed, like a place dedicate to melancholy. I observed the Master kept his head out, looking back on the splashed walls and glimmering roofs, till they were suddenly swallowed in the mist; and I must suppose some natural sadness fell upon the man at this departure; or was it some prevision of the end? At least, upon our mounting the long brae from Durrisdeer, as we walked side by side in the wet, he began first to whistle and then to sing the saddest of our country tunes, which sets folk weeping in a tavern, "Wandering Willie." The set of words he used with it I have not heard elsewhere, and could never come by any copy; but some of them which were the most appropriate to our departure linger in my memory. One verse began:

> Home was home then, my dear, full of kindly faces;
>   Home was home then, my dear, happy for the child.

And ended somewhat thus:

> Now, when day dawns on the brow of the moorland,
>   Lone stands the house and the chimney-stone is cold.
> Lone let it stand, now the folks are all departed,
>   The kind hearts, the true hearts, that loved the place of old.

I could never be a judge of the merit of these verses; they were so hallowed by the melancholy of the air, and were sung (or rather "soothed") to me by a master singer at a time so fitting. He looked in my face when he had done, and saw that my eyes watered.

"Ah, Mackellar," said he, "do you think I have never a regret?"

"I do not think you could be so bad a man," said I, "if you had not all the machinery to be a good one."

"No, not all," says he: "not all. You are there in error. The malady of not wanting, my evangelist." But methought he sighed as he mounted again into the chaise.

All day long we journeyed in the same miserable weather: the mist besetting us closely, the heavens incessantly weeping on my head. The road lay over moorish hills, where was no sound but the crying of the moor-fowl in the wet heather and the pouring of the swollen burns. Sometimes I would doze off in slumber, when I would find myself plunged at once in some foul and ominous nightmare, from the which I would awaken strangling. Sometimes, if the way was steep and the wheels turning slowly, I would overhear the voices from within, talking in that tropical tongue which was to me as inarticulate as the piping of the fowls. Sometimes, at a longer ascent, the Master would set foot to ground and walk by my side, mostly without speech. And all the time, sleeping or waking, I beheld the same black perspective of approaching ruin; and the same pictures rose in my view, only they were now painted upon hill-side mist. One, I remember, stood before me with the colors of a true illusion. It showed me my lord seated at a table in a small room; his head, which was at first buried in his hands, he slowly raised, and turned upon me a countenance from which hope had fled. I saw it first on the black window panes, my last night in Durrisdeer; it haunted and returned upon me half the voyage through; and yet it was no effect of lunacy, for I have come to a ripe old age with no decay of my intelligence; nor yet (as I was then tempted to suppose) a heaven-sent warning of the future, for all manner of calamities befell, not that calamity—and I saw many pitiful sights, but never that one.

It was decided we should travel on all night; and it was singular, once the dusk had fallen, my spirits somewhat rose. The bright lamps, shining forth into the mist and on the smoking horses and the nodding post-boy, gave me perhaps an outlook intrinsically more cheerful than what day had shown; or perhaps my mind had become wearied of its melancholy. At least, I spent some waking hours, not without satisfaction in my thoughts, although wet and weary in my body; and fell at last into a natural slumber without dreams. Yet I must have been at work even in the deepest of my sleep; and at work with at least a measure of intelligence. For I started broad awake, in the very act of crying out to myself:

> Home was home then, my dear, happy for the child,

stricken to find in it an appropriateness, which I had not yesterday observed, to the Master's detestable purpose in the present journey.

We were then close upon the city of Glasgow, where we were soon breakfasting together at an inn, and where (as the devil would have it) we found a ship in the very article of sailing. We took places in the cabin; and, two days after, carried our effects on board. Her name was the *Nonesuch,* a very ancient ship and very happily named. By all accounts this should be her last voyage; people shook their heads upon the quays, and I had several warnings offered me by strangers in the street, to the effect that she was rotten as a cheese, too deeply loaden, and must infallibly founder if we met a gale. From this it fell out we were the only passengers; the captain, McMurtrie, was a silent, absorbed man with the Glasgow or Gaelic accent; the mates ignorant, rough seafarers, come in through the hawsehole; and the master and I were cast upon each other's company.

The *Nonesuch* carried a fair wind out of the Clyde, and for near upon a week we enjoyed bright weather and a sense of progress. I found myself (to my wonder) a born seaman, in so far at least as I was never sick; yet I was far from tasting the usual serenity of my health. Whether it was the motion of the ship on the billows, the confinement, the salted food, or all of these together, I suffered from a blackness of spirit and a painful strain upon my temper. The nature of my errand on that ship perhaps contributed; I think it did no more: the malady (whatever it was) sprung from my environment; and if the ship were not to blame, then it was the Master. Hatred and fear are ill bedfellows; but (to my shame be it spoken) I have tasted those in other places, lain down and got up with them, and eaten and drunk with them, and yet never before, nor after, have I been so poisoned through and through, in soul and body, as I was on board the *Nonesuch*. I freely confess my enemy set me a fair example of forbearance; in our worst days displayed the most patient geniality, holding me in conversation as long as I would suffer, and when I had rebuffed his civility, stretching himself on deck to read. The book he had on board with him was Mr. Richardson's famous "Clarissa"; and among other small attentions he would read me passages aloud; nor could any elocutionist have given with greater potency the pathetic portions of that work. I would retort upon him with passages out of the Bible, which was all my library—and very fresh to me, my religious duties (I grieve to say it) being always and even to this day extremely neglected. He tasted the merits of the work like the connoisseur he was; and would sometimes take it from my hand, turn the leaves over like a man that knew his way, and give me, with his fine declamation, a Roland for my Oliver. But it was singular how little he applied his reading to himself; it passed high above his head like summer thunder: Lovelace and Clarissa, the tales of David's generosity, the psalms of his penitence, the solemn questions of the book of Job, the touching poetry of Isaiah—they were to him a source of entertainment only, like the scraping of a fiddle in a change-house. This outer sensibility and inner toughness set me against him; it seemed of a piece with that impudent grossness which I knew to underlie the veneer of his fine manners; and sometimes my gorge rose against him as though he were deformed—and sometimes I would draw away as though from something partly spectral. I had moments when I thought of him as of a man of pasteboard—as though, if one should strike smartly through the buckram of his countenance, there would be found a mere vacuity within. This horror (not merely fanciful, I think) vastly increased my detestation of his neighborhood; I began to feel something shiver within me on his drawing near; I had at times a longing to cry out; there were days when I thought I could have struck him. This frame of mind was doubtless helped by shame, because I had dropped during our last days at Durrisdeer into a certain toleration of the man; and if any one had then told me I should drop into it again, I must have laughed in his face. It is possible he remained unconscious of this extreme fever of my resentment; yet I think he was too quick; and rather that he had fallen, in a long life of idleness, into a positive need of company which obliged him to confront and tolerate my unconcealed aversion. Certain at least, that he loved the note of his own tongue, as indeed he entirely loved all the parts and properties of himself: a sort of imbecility which almost necessarily attends on wickedness. I have seen him driven, when I proved recalcitrant, to long discourses with the skipper: and this, although the man plainly testified his weariness, fiddling miserably with both hand and foot, and replying only with a grunt.

After the first week out we fell in with foul winds and heavy weather. The sea was high. The *Nonesuch,* being an old-fashioned ship and badly loaden, rolled beyond belief; so that the skipper trembled for his masts and I for my life. We made no progress on our course. An unbearable ill humor settled on the ship; men, mates and master girding at one another all day long. A saucy word on the one hand, and a blow on the other, made a daily incident. There were times when the whole crew refused their duty; and we of the afterguard were twice got under arms (being the first time that ever I bore weapons) in the fear of mutiny.

In the midst of our evil season sprung up a hurricane of wind; so that all supposed she must go down. I was shut in the cabin from noon of one day till sundown of the next; the Master was somewhere lashed on deck. Secundra had eaten of some drug and lay insensible; so you may say I passed these hours in an unbroken solitude. At first I was terrified beyond motion and almost beyond thought, my mind appearing to be frozen. Presently there stole in on me a ray of comfort. If the *None-*

such foundered, she would carry down with her into the deeps of that unsounded sea the creature whom we all so feared and hated; there would be no more Master of Ballantrae, the fish would sport among his ribs; his schemes all brought to nothing, his harmless enemies at peace. At first, I have said, it was but a ray of comfort; but it had soon grown to be broad sunshine. The thought of the man's death, of his deletion from this world which he embittered for so many, took possession of my mind. I hugged it, I found it sweet in my belly. I conceived the ship's last plunge, the sea bursting upon all sides into the cabin, the brief mortal conflict there, all by myself, in that closed place; I numbered the horrors, I had almost said with satisfaction; I felt I could bear all and more, if the *Nonesuch* carried down with her, overtook by the same ruin, the enemy of my poor master's house. Toward noon of the second day the screaming of the wind abated; the ship lay not so perilously over; and it began to be clear to me that we were past the height of the tempest. As I hope for mercy, I was singly disappointed. In the selfishness of that vile, absorbing passion of hatred, I forgot the case of our innocent shipmates and thought but of myself and my enemy. For myself, I was already old, I had never been young, I was not formed for the world's pleasures, I had few affections; it mattered not the toss of a silver tester whether I was drowned there and then in the Atlantic, or dribbled out a few more years, to die, perhaps no less terribly, in a deserted sick-bed. Down I went upon my knees—holding on by the locker, or else I had been instantly dashed across the tossing cabin—and, lifting up my voice in the midst of that clamor of the abating hurricane, impiously prayed for my own death. "Oh, God," I cried, "I would be liker a man if I rose and struck this creature down; but thou madest me a coward from my mother's womb. Oh, Lord, thou madest me so, thou knowest my weakness, thou knowest that any face of death will set me shaking in my shoes. But lo! here is thy servant ready, his mortal weakness laid aside. Let me give my life for this creature's; take the two of them, Lord! take the two, and have mercy on the innocent!" In some such words as these, only yet more irreverent and with more sacred adjurations, I continued to pour forth my spirit; God heard me not, I must suppose in mercy; and I was still absorbed in my agony of supplication, when some one, removing the tarpaulin cover, let the light of the sunset pour into the cabin. I stumbled to my feet ashamed, and was seized with surprise to find myself totter and ache like one that had been stretched upon the rack. Secundra Dass, who had slept off the effects of his drug, stood in a corner not far off, gazing at me with wild eyes; and from the open skylight the captain thanked me for my supplications.

"It's you that saved the ship, Mr. Mackellar," says he. "There is no craft of seamanship that could have kept her floating: well may we say: 'Except the Lord the city keep, the watchman watch in vain!' "

I was abashed by the captain's error; abashed, also, by the surprise and fear with which the Indian regarded me at first, and the obsequious civilities with which he soon began to cumber me. I know now that he must have overheard and comprehended the peculiar nature of my prayers. It is certain, of course, that he at once disclosed the matter to his patron; and looking back with greater knowledge, I can now understand, what so much puzzled me at the moment, those singular and (so to speak) approving smiles with which the Master honored me. Similarly, I can understand a word that I remember to have fallen from him in conversation that same night; when, holding up his hand and smiling, "Ah, Mackellar," said he, "not every man is so great a coward as he thinks he is—nor yet so good a Christian." He did not guess how true he spoke! For the fact is, the thoughts which had come to me in the violence of the storm retained their hold upon my spirit; and the words that rose to my lips unbidden in the instancy of prayer continued to sound in my ears: With what shameful consequences, it is fitting I should honestly relate; for I could not support a part of such disloyalty as to describe the sins of others and conceal my own.

The wind fell, but the sea hove ever the higher. All night the *Nonesuch* rolled outrageously; the next day dawned, and the next, and brought no change. To cross the cabin was scarce possible; old, experienced seamen were cast down upon the deck, and one cruelly mauled in the concussion; every board and block in the old ship cried out aloud; and the great bell by the anchor-bitts continually and dolefully rang. One of these days the Master and I sat alone together at the break of the poop. I should say the *Nonesuch* carried a high, raised poop. About the top of it ran considerable bulwarks, which made the ship unweatherly; and these, as they approached the front on each side, ran down in a fine, old-fashioned, carven scroll to join the bulwarks of the waist. From this disposition, which seems designed rather for ornament than use, it followed there was a discontinuance of protection: and that, besides, at the very margin of the elevated part where (in certain movements of the ship) it might be the most needful. It was here we were sitting: our feet hanging down, the Master between me and the side, and I holding on with both hands to the grating of the cabin skylight; for it struck me it was a dangerous position, the more so as I had continually before my eyes a measure of our evolutions in the person of the Master, which stood out in the break of the bulwarks against the sun. Now his head would be in the zenith and his shadow fall quite beyond the *Nonesuch* on the further side; and now he would swing down till he was underneath my feet, and the line of the sea leaped high above him like the ceiling of a room. I looked on upon this with a growing fascination, as birds are said to look on snakes. My mind besides was troubled with an astonishing diversity of noises; for now that we had all sails spread in the vain hope to bring her to the sea, the ship sounded like a factory with their reverberations. We spoke first of the mutiny with which we had been threatened; this led us on to the topic of assassination; and that offered a temptation to the Master more strong than he was able to resist. He must tell me a tale, and show me at the same time how clever he was and how wicked. It was a thing he did always with affectation and display;

generally with a good effect. But this tale, told in a high key in the midst of so great a tumult, and by a narrator who was one moment looking down at me from the skies and the next peering up from under the soles of my feet —this particular tale, I say, took hold upon me in a degree quite singular.

"My friend the count," it was thus that he began his story, "had for an enemy a certain German baron, a stranger in Rome. It matters not what was the ground of the count's enmity; but as he had a firm design to be revenged, and that with safety to himself, he kept it secret even from the baron. Indeed that is the first principle of vengeance; and hatred betrayed is hatred impotent. The count was a man of a curious, searching mind; he had something of the artist; if anything fall for him to do, it must always be done with an exact perfection, not only as to the result but in the very means and instruments, or he thought the thing miscarried. It chanced he was one day riding in the outer suburbs, when he came to a disused byroad branching off into the moor which lies about Rome. On the one hand was an ancient Roman tomb; on the other a deserted house in a garden of evergreen trees. This road brought him presently into a field of ruins, in the midst of which, in the side of a hill, he saw an open door and (not far off) a single stunted pine no greater than a currant bush. The place was desert and very secret: a voice spoke in the count's bosom that there was something here to his advantage. He tied his horse to the pine tree, took his flint and steel in his hand to make a light, and entered into the hill. The doorway opened on a passage of old Roman masonry, which shortly after branched in two. The count took the turning to the right, and followed it, groping forward in the dark, till he was brought up by a kind of fence about elbow-high, which extended quite across the passage. Sounding forward with his foot, he found an edge of polished stone, and then vacancy. All his curiosity was now awakened, and, getting some rotten sticks that lay about the floor, he made a fire. In front of him was a profound well: doubtless some neighboring peasant had once used it for his water, and it was he that had set up the fence. A long while the count stood leaning on the rail and looking down into the pit. It was of Roman foundation, and, like all that nation set their hands to, built as for eternity: the sides were still straight and the joints smooth; to a man who should fall in, no escape was possible. 'Now,' the count was thinking, 'a strong impulsion brought me to this place: what for? what have I gained? why should I be sent to gaze into this well?'—when the rail of the fence gave suddenly, under his weight, and he came within an ace of falling headlong in. Leaping back to save himself, he trod out the last flicker of his fire, which gave him thenceforward no more light, only an incommoding smoke. 'Was I sent here to my death?' says he, and shook from head to foot. And then a thought flashed in his mind. He crept forth on hands and knees to the brink of the pit and felt above him in the air. The rail had been fast to a pair of uprights; it had only broken from the one, and still depended from the other. The count set it back again as he had found it, so that the place meant death to the first comer, and groped out of the catacomb like a sick man. The next day, riding in the Corso with the baron, he purposely betrayed a strong preoccupation. The other (as he had designed) inquired into the cause; and he (after some fencing) admitted that his spirits had been dashed by an unusual dream. This was calculated to draw on the baron—a superstitious man who affected the scorn of superstition. Some rallying followed; and then the count (as if suddenly carried away) called on his friend to beware, for it was of him that he had dreamed. You know enough of human nature, my excellent Mackellar, to be certain of one thing: I mean, that the baron did not rest till he had heard the dream. The count (sure that he would never desist) kept him in play till his curiosity was highly inflamed, and then suffered himself with seeming reluctance to be overborne. 'I warn you,' says he, 'evil will come of it; something tells me so. But since there is to be no peace either for you or me except on this condition, the blame be on your own head! This was the dream. I beheld you riding, I know not where, yet I think it must have been near Rome, for on your one hand was an ancient tomb and on the other a garden of evergreen trees. Methought I cried and cried upon you to come back in a very agony of terror; whether you heard me, I know not, but you went doggedly on. The road brought you to a desert place among ruins: where was a door in a hillside, and hard by the door a misbegotten pine. Here you dismounted (I still crying on you to beware), tied your horse to the pine tree, and entered resolutely in by the door. Within it was dark; but in my dream I could still see you, and still besought you to hold back. You felt your way along the right-hand wall, took a branching passage to the right, and came to a little chamber, where was a well with a railing. At this (I know not why) my alarm for you increased a thousand-fold, so that I seemed to scream myself hoarse with warnings, crying it was still time and bidding you begone at once from that vestibule. Such was the word I used in my dream, and it seemed then to have a clear significance; but to-day and awake, I profess I know not what it means. To all my outcry you rendered not the least attention, leaning the while upon the rail and looking down intently in the water. And then there was made to you a communication, I do not think I even gathered what it was, but the fear of it plucked me clean out of my slumber, and I awoke shaking and sobbing. And now,' continues the count, 'I thank you from my heart for your insistence. This dream lay on me like a load; and now I have told it in plain words and in the broad daylight, it seems no great matter.' 'I do not know,' says the baron. 'It is in some points strange. A communication, did you say? Oh, it is an odd dream. It will make a story to amuse our friends.' 'I am not so sure,' says the count. 'I am sensible of some reluctance. Let us rather forget it.' 'By all means,' says the baron. And (in fact) the dream was not again referred to. Some days after the count proposed a ride in the fields, which the baron (since they were daily growing faster friends) very readily accepted. On the way back to Rome the count led them insensibly by a particular route. Presently he reined in his horse, clapped his hand before his eyes, and cried out aloud. Then he showed his face again (which was now quite white, for he was a consummate actor) and stared upon the baron. 'What ails you?' cries the baron. 'What is wrong with you?' 'Nothing,' cries the count. 'It is nothing. A seizure, I know not what. Let us hurry back to Rome.' But in the mean while the baron had looked about him; and there, on the left-hand side of the way as they went back to Rome, he saw a dusty by-road with a tomb upon the one hand and a garden of evergreen trees upon the other. 'Yes,' says he, with a changed voice. 'Let us by all means hurry back to Rome. I fear you are not well in health.' 'Oh, for God's sake!' cries the count, shuddering. 'Back to Rome and let me get to bed.' They made their return with scarce a word; and the count, who should by rights have gone into society, took to his bed and gave out he had a touch of country fever. The next day the baron's horse was found tied to the pine, but himself was never heard of from that hour. And now, was that a murder?" says the Master, breaking sharply off.

"Are you sure he was a count?" I asked.

"I am not certain of the title," said he, "but he was a gentleman of family, and the Lord deliver you, Mackellar, from an enemy so subtle!"

These last words he spoke down at me smiling, from high above; the next he was under my feet. I continued to follow his evolutions with a childish fixity; they made me giddy and vacant, and I spoke as in a dream.

"He hated the baron with a great hatred?" I asked.

"His belly moved when the man came near him," said the Master.

"I have felt that same," said I.

"Verily!" cried the Master. "Here is news indeed! I wonder—do I flatter myself? or am I the cause of these ventral perturbations?"

He was quite capable of choosing out a graceful posture, even with no one to behold him but myself, and all the more if there were any element of peril. He sat now with one knee flung across the other, his arms on his bosom, fitting the swing of the ship with an exquisite balance, such as a featherweight might overthrow. All at once I had the vision of my lord at the table with his head upon his hands; only now, when he showed me his countenance, it was heavy with reproach. The words of my own prayer—*I were liker a man if I struck this creature down*—shot at the same time into my memory, I called my energies together, and (the ship then heeling downward toward my enemy) thrust at him swiftly with my foot. It was written I should have the guilt of this attempt without the profit. Whether from my own uncertainty or his incredible quickness, he escaped the thrust, leaping to his feet and catching hold at the same moment of a stay.

I do not know how long a time passed by: I lying where I was upon the deck, overcome with terror and remorse and shame: he standing with the stay in his hand, backed against the bulwarks, and regarding me with an expression singularly mingled. At last he spoke.

"Mackellar," said he, "I make no reproaches, but I offer you a bargain. On your side, I do not suppose you desire to have this exploit made public; on mine, I own to you freely, I do not care to draw my breath in a perpetual terror of assassination by the man I sit at meat with. Promise me—but no," says he, breaking off, "you are not yet in the quiet possession of your mind; you might think I had extorted the promise from your weakness; and I would leave no door open for casuistry to come in—that dishonesty of the conscientious. Take time to meditate."

With that he made off up the sliding deck like a squirrel and plunged into the cabin. About half an hour later he returned: I still lying as he had left me.

"Now," says he, "will you give me your troth as a Christian and a faithful servant of my brother's that I shall have no more to fear from your attempts?"

"I give it you," said I.

"I shall require your hand upon it," says he.

"You have the right to make conditions," I replied, and we shook hands.

He sat down at once in the same place and the old perilous attitude.

"Hold on!" cried I, covering my eyes. "I can not bear to see you in that posture. The least irregularity of the sea might plunge you overboard."

"You are highly inconsistent," he replied, smiling, but doing as I asked. "For all that, Mackellar, I would have you to know you have risen forty feet in my esteem. You think I can not set a price upon fidelity? But why do you suppose I carry that Secundra Dass about the world with me? Because he would die or do murder for me to-morrow; and I love him for it. Well, you may think it odd, but I like you the better for this afternoon's performance. I thought you were magnetized with the Ten Commandments; but no—God damn my soul!" he cries, "the old wife has blood in his body after all! which does not change the fact," he continued, smiling again, "that you have done well to give your promise; for I doubt if you would ever shine in your new trade."

"I suppose," said I, "I should ask your pardon and God's for my attempt. At any rate I have passed my word, which I will keep faithfully. But when I think of those you persecute—" I paused.

"Life is a singular thing," said he, "and mankind a very singular people. You suppose yourself to love my brother. I assure you it is merely custom. Interrogate your memory; and when first you came to Durrisdeer, you will find you considered him a dull, ordinary youth. He is as dull and ordinary now, though not so young. Had you instead fallen in with me, you would to-day be as strong upon my side."

"I would never say you were ordinary, Mr. Bally," I returned; "but here you prove yourself dull. You have just shown your reliance on my word. In other terms, that is my conscience—the same which starts instinctively back from you, like the eye from a strong light."

"Ah!" says he, "but I mean otherwise. I mean, had I met you in my youth. You are to consider I was not always as I am to-day; nor (had I met in with a friend of your description) should I have ever been so."

"Hut, Mr. Bally," says I, "you would have made a mock of me; you would never have spent ten civil words on such a squaretoes."

But he was now fairly started on his new course of justification, with which he wearied me throughout the remainder of the passage. No doubt in the past he had taken pleasure to paint himself unnecessarily black, and made a vaunt of his wickedness, bearing it for a coat of arms.

Nor was he so illogical as to abate one item of his old confessions. "But now that I know you are a human being," he would say, "I can take the trouble to explain myself. For I assure you I am human too, and have my virtues like my neighbors." I say he wearied me, for I had only the one word to say in answer: twenty times I must have said it: "Give up your present purpose and return with me to Durrisdeer; then I will believe you."

Thereupon he would shake his head at me. "Ah, Mackellar, you might live a thousand years and never understand my nature," he would say. "This battle is now committed, the hour of reflection quite past, the hour for mercy not yet come. It began between us when we span a coin in the hall of Durrisdeer now twenty years ago; we have had our ups and downs, but never either of us dreamed of giving in, and as for me, when my glove is cast life and honor go with it."

"A fig for your honor!" I would say. "And by your leave, these warlike similitudes are something too high-sounding for the matter in hand. You want some dirty money, there is the bottom of your contention, and as for your means, what are they?—to stir up sorrow in a family that never harmed you, to debauch (if you can) your own born nephew and to wring the heart of your born brother! A footpad that kills an old granny in a woolen mutch with a dirty bludgeon, and that for a shilling-piece and a paper of snuff—there is all the warrior that you are."

When I would attack him thus (or somewhat thus) he would smile and sigh like a man misunderstood. Once I remember, he defended himself more at large and had some curious sophistries, worth repeating for a light upon his character.

"You are very like a civilian to think war consists in drums and banners," said he. "War (as the ancients said very wisely) is *ultima ratio*. When we take our advantage unrelentingly, then we make war. Ah, Mackellar, you are a devil of a soldier in the steward's room at Durrisdeer, or the tenants do you sad injustice!"

"I think little of what war is or is not," I replied. "But you weary me with claiming my respect. Your brother is a good man, and you are a bad one—neither more nor less."

"Had I been Alexander—" he began.

"It is so we all dupe ourselves," I cried. "Had I been St. Paul, it would have been all one; I would have made the same hash of that career that you now see me making of my own."

"I tell you," he cried, bearing down my interruption, "had I been the least petty chieftain in the highlands, had I been the least king of naked negroes in the African desert, my people would have adored me. A bad man, am I? Ah, but I was born for a good tyrant! Ask Secundra Dass; he will tell you I treat him like a son. Cast in your lot with me to-morrow, become my slave, my chattel, a thing I can command as I command the powers of my own limbs and spirit—you will see no more that dark side that I turn upon the world in anger. I must have all or none. But where all is given, I give it back with usury. I have a kingly nature: there is my loss!"

"It has been hitherto rather the loss of others," I remarked; "which seems a little on the hither side of royalty."

"Tilly vally!" cried he. "Even now, I tell you I would spare that family in which you take so great an interest: yes, even now—to-morrow I would leave them to their petty welfare, and disappear in that forest of cutthroats and thimbleriggers that we call the world. I would do it to-morrow!" says he. "Only—only—"

"Only what?" I asked.

"Only they must beg it on their bended knees. I think in public too," he added, smiling. "Indeed, Mackellar, I doubt if there be a hall big enough to serve my purpose for that act of reparation."

"Vanity, vanity!" I moralized. "To think that this great force for evil should be swayed by the same sentiment that sets a lassie mincing to her glass!"

"Oh, there are double words for everything; the word that swells, the word that belittles; you can not fight me with a word!" said he. "You said the other day that I relied on your conscience: were I in your humor of detraction, I might say I build upon your vanity. It is your pretension to be *un homme de parole;* 'tis mine not to accept defeat. Call it vanity, call it virtue, call it greatness of soul—what signifies the expression? But recognize in each of us a common strain; that we both live for an idea."

It will be gathered from so much familiar talk, and so much patience on both sides, that we now lived together upon excellent terms. Such was again the fact, and this time more seriously than before. Apart from disputations such as that which I have tried to reproduce, not only consideration reigned, but I am tempted to say even kindness. When I fell sick (as I did shortly after our great storm) he sat by my berth to entertain me with his conversation, and treated me with excellent remedies, which I accepted with security. Himself commented on the circumstance. "You see," says he, "you begin to know me better. A very little while ago, upon this lonely ship, where no one but myself has any smattering of science, you would have made sure I had designs upon your life. And observe, it is since I found you had designs upon my own that I have shown you most respect. You will tell me if this speaks of a small mind." I found little to reply. In so far as regarded myself, I believed him to mean well; I am perhaps the more a dupe of his dissimulation, but I believed (and I still believe) that he regarded me with genuine kindness. Singular and sad fact! so soon as this change began, my animosity abated, and these haunting visions of my master passed utterly away. So that, perhaps, there was truth in the man's last vaunting word to me, uttered on the second day of July, when our long voyage was at last brought almost to an end, and we lay becalmed at the sea end of the vast harbor of New York in a gasping heat which was presently exchanged for a surprising waterfall of rain. I stood on the poop regarding the green shores near at hand, and now and then the light smoke of the little town, our destination. And as I was even then devising how to steal

I called my energies together, and (the ship then heeling downward toward my enemy) thrust at him swiftly with my foot.

—*Master of Ballantrae*, p. 172

a march on my familiar enemy, I was conscious of a shade of embarrassment when he approached me with his hand extended.

"I am now to bid you farewell," said he, "and that forever. For now you go among my enemies, where all your former prejudices will revive. I never yet failed to charm a person when I wanted; even you, my good friend—to call you so for once—even you have now a very different portrait of me in your memory, and one that you will never quite forget. The voyage has not lasted long enough, or I should have wrote the impression deeper. But now all is at an end, and we are again at war. Judge by this little interlude how dangerous I am; and tell those fools"—pointing with his finger to the town—"to think twice and thrice before they set me at defiance."

PASSAGES AT NEW YORK

I HAVE mentioned I was resolved to steal a march upon the Master; and this, with the complicity of Captain McMurtrie, was mighty easily effected; a boat being partly loaded on the one side of our ship and the Master placed on board of it, the while a skiff put off from the other carrying me alone. I had no more trouble in finding a direction to my lord's house, whither I went at top speed, and which I found to be on the outskirts of the place, a very suitable mansion, in a fine garden, with an extraordinary large barn, byre, and stable all in one. It was here my lord was walking when I arrived; indeed it had become his chief place of frequentation, and his mind was now filled with farming. I burst in upon him breathless, and gave him my news; which was indeed no news at all, several ships having outsailed the *Nonesuch* in the interval.

"We have been expecting you long," said my lord; "and indeed, of late days, ceased to expect you any more. I am glad to take your hand again, Mackellar. I thought you had been at the bottom of the sea."

"Ah, my lord, would God I had!" cried I. "Things would have been better for yourself."

"Not in the least," says he grimly. "I could not ask better. There is a long score to pay, and now—at last—I can begin to pay it."

I cried out against his security.

"Oh," says he, "this is not Durrisdeer, and I have taken my precautions. His reputation awaits him, I have prepared a welcome for my brother. Indeed, fortune has served me; for I found here a merchant of Albany who knew him after the '45 and had mighty convenient suspicions of a murder; some one of the name of Chew it was, another Albanian. No one here will be surprised if I deny him my door; he will not be suffered to address my children nor even to salute my wife; as for myself, I make so much exception for a brother that he may speak to me. I should lose my pleasure else," says my lord, rubbing his palms.

Presently he bethought himself, and set men off running with billets, to summon the magnates of the province. I can not recall what pretext he employed; at least it was successful; and when our ancient enemy appeared upon the scene he found my lord pacing in front of his house under some trees of shade, with the governor upon one hand and various notables upon the other. My lady, who was seated in the veranda, rose with a very pinched expression and carried her children into the house.

The Master, well dressed and with an elegant walking-sword, bowed to the company in a handsome manner and nodded to my lord with familiarity. My lord did not accept the salutation, but looked upon his brother with bended brows.

"Well, sir," says he, at last, "what ill wind brings you hither of all places, where (to our common disgrace) your reputation has preceded you?"

"Your lordship is pleased to be civil," cries the Master with a fine start.

"I am pleased to be very plain," returned my lord; "because it is needful you should clearly understand your situation. At home, where you were so little known, it was still possible to keep appearances; that would be quite vain in this province; and I have to tell you that I am quite resolved to wash my hands of you. You have already ruined me almost to the door, as you ruined my father before me; whose heart you also broke. Your crimes escape the law; but my friend the governor has promised protection to my family. Have a care, sir!" cries my lord, shaking his cane at him: "if you are observed to utter two words to any of my innocent household, the law shall be stretched to make you smart for it."

"Ah!" says the Master, very slowly. "And so this is the advantage of a foreign land! These gentlemen are unacquainted with our story, I perceive. They do not know that I am the Lord Durrisdeer; they do not know you are my younger brother, sitting in my place under a sworn family compact; they do not know (or they would not be seen with you in familiar correspondence) that every acre is mine before God Almighty—and every doit of the money you withhold from me, you do it as a thief, a perjurer, and a disloyal brother!"

"General Clinton," I cried, "do not listen to his lies. I am the steward of the estate, and there is not one word of truth in it. The man is a forfeited rebel turned into a hired spy; there is his story in two words."

It was thus that (in the heat of the moment) I let slip his infamy.

"Fellow," said the governor, turning his face sternly on the Master, "I know more of you than you think for. We have some broken ends of your adventures in the provinces, which you will do very well not to drive me to investigate. There is the disappearance of Mr. Jacob Chew with all his merchandise; there is the matter of where you came ashore from with so much money and jewels, when you were picked up by a Bermudan out of Albany. Believe me, if I let these matters lie it is in commiseration for your family and out of respect for my valued friend, Lord Durrisdeer."

There was a murmur of applause from the provincials.

"I should have remembered how a title would shine out in such a hole as this," says the Master, white as a sheet; "no matter how unjustly come by. It remains for me then to die at my lord's door, where my dead body will form a very cheerful ornament."

"Away with your affectations!" cried my lord. "You know very well I have no such meaning; only to protect myself from calumny and my home from your intrusion. I offer you a choice. Either I shall pay your passage home on the first ship, when you may perhaps be able to resume your occupations under government, although God knows I would rather see you on the highway! Or, if that likes you not, stay here and welcome! I have inquired the least sum on which body and soul can be decently kept together in New York; so much you shall have, paid weekly; and if you can not labor with your hands to better it, high time you should betake yourself to learn! The condition is, that you speak with no member of my family except myself," he added.

I do not think I have ever seen any man so pale as was the Master; but he was erect and his mouth firm.

"I have been met here with some very unmerited insults," said he, "from which I have certainly no idea to take refuge by flight. Give me your pittance; I take it without shame, for it is mine already—like the shirt upon your back; and I choose to stay until these gentlemen shall understand me better. Already they must spy the cloven hoof; since with all your pretended eagerness for the family honor, you take a pleasure to degrade it in my person."

"This is all very fine," says my lord; "but to us who know you of old, you must be sure it signifies nothing. You take that alternative out of which you think that you can make the most. Take it, if you can, in silence; it will serve you better in the long run, you may believe me, than this ostentation of ingratitude."

"Oh, gratitude, my lord!" cries the Master, with a mounting intonation and his forefinger very conspicuously lifted up. "Be at rest; it will not fail you. It now remains that I should salute these gentlemen whom we have wearied with our family affairs."

And he bowed to each in succession, settled his walking-sword, and took himself off, leaving every one amazed at his behavior, and me not less so at my lord's.

We were now to enter on a changed phase of this family division. The Master was by no manner of means so helpless as my lord supposed, having at his hand and entirely devoted to his service an excellent artist in all sorts of goldsmith work. With my lord's allowance, which was not so scanty as he had described it, the pair could support life; and all the earnings of Secundra Dass might be laid upon one side for any future purpose. That this was done, I have no doubt. It was in all likelihood the Master's design to gather a sufficiency, and then proceed in quest of that treasure which he had buried long before among the mountains; to which, if he had confined himself, he would have been more happily inspired. But unfortunately for himself and all of us, he took counsel of his anger. The public disgrace of his arrival (which I sometimes wonder he could manage to survive) rankled in his bones; he was in that humor when a man (in the words of the old adage) will cut off his nose to spite his face; and he must make himself a public spectacle, in the hopes that some of the disgrace might spatter on my lord.

He chose, in a poor quarter of the town, a lonely small house of boards, overhung with some acacias. It was furnished in front with a sort of hutch opening, like that of a dog's kennel, but about as high as a table from the ground, in which the poor man that built it had formerly displayed some wares; and it was this which took the Master's fancy and possibly suggested his proceedings. It appears, on board the pirate ship, he had acquired some quickness with the needle; enough at least to play the part of tailor in the public eye; which was all that was required by the nature of his vengeance. A placard was hung above the hutch, bearing these words in something of the following disposition:

JAMES DURIE

FORMERLY MASTER OF BALLANTRAE

CLOTHES NEATLY CLOUTED.

SECUNDRA DASS

DECAYED GENTLEMAN OF INDIA

FINE GOLDSMITH WORK.

Underneath this, when he had a job, my gentleman sat withinside tailor-wise and busily stitching. I say, when he had a job; but such customers as came were rather for Secundra, and the Master's sewing would be more in the manner of Penelope's. He could never have designed to gain even butter to his bread by such a means of livelihood; enough for him that there was the name of Durie dragged in the dirt on the placard, and the sometime heir of that proud family set up cross-legged in public for a reproach upon his brother's meanness. And in so far his device succeeded, that there was murmuring in the town and a party formed highly inimical to my lord. My lord's favor with the governor laid him more open on the other side; my lady (who was never so well received in the colony) met with painful innuendoes; in a party of women where it would be the topic most natural to introduce, she was almost debarred from the naming of needlework; and I have seen her return with a flushed countenance and vow that she would go abroad no more.

In the mean while, my lord dwelt in his decent mansion, immersed in farming; a popular man with his intimates, and careless or unconscious of the rest. He laid on flesh; had a bright, busy face; even the heat seemed to prosper with him; and my lady (in despite of her own annoyances) daily blessed Heaven her father should have left her such a paradise. She had looked on from a window upon the Master's humiliation; and from that hour appeared to feel at ease. I was not so sure myself: as time went on there seemed to me a something not quite wholesome in my lord's condition; happy he was, beyond a doubt, but the grounds of this felicity were secret; even in the bosom of his family he brooded with manifest delight upon some private thought; and I conceived at last the suspicion (quite unworthy of us both) that he kept a mistress somewhere in the town. Yet he went little abroad, and his day was very fully occupied; indeed there was but a single period, and that pretty early in the morning while Mr. Alexander was at his lesson-book, of which I was not certain of the disposition.

It should be borne in mind, in the defense of that which I now did, that I was always in some fear my lord was not quite justly in his reason; and with our enemy sitting so still in the same town with us, I did well to be upon my guard. Accordingly I made a pretext, had the hour changed at which I taught Mr. Alexander the foundation of ciphering and the mathematic, and set myself instead to dog my master's footsteps.

Every morning, fair or foul, he took his gold-headed cane, set his hat on the back of his head—a recent habitude, which I thought to indicate a burning brow—and betook himself to make a certain circuit. At the first his way was among pleasant trees and beside a graveyard, where he would sit a while, if the day were fine, in meditation. Presently the path turned down to the water-side and came back along the harbor front and past the Master's booth. As he approached this second part of his circuit my lord Durrisdeer began to pace more leisurely, like a man delighted with the air and scene; and before the booth, half-way between that and the water's edge, would pause a little, leaning on his staff. It was the hour when the Master sate within upon his board and plied his needle. So these two brothers would gaze upon each other with hard faces; and then my lord move on again, smiling to himself.

It was but twice that I must stoop to that ungrateful necessity of playing spy. I was then certain of my lord's purpose in his rambles and of the secret source of his delight. Here was his mistress; it was hatred and not love that gave him healthful colors. Some moralists might have been relieved by the discovery, I confess that I was dismayed. I found this situation of two brethren not only odious in itself, but big with possibilities of further evil; and I made it my practise, in so far as many occupations would allow, to go by a shorter path and be secretly present at their meeting. Coming down one day a little late, after I had been near a week prevented, I was struck with surprise to find a new development. I should say there was a bench against the Master's house, where customers might sit to parley with the shopman; and here I found my lord seated, nursing his cane and looking pleasantly forth upon the bay. Not three feet from him sat the Master stitching. Neither spoke; nor (in this new situation) did my lord so much as cast a glance upon his enemy. He tasted his neighborhood, I must suppose, less indirectly in the bare proximity of person; and, without doubt, drank deep of hateful pleasures.

He had no sooner come away than I openly joined him. "My lord, my lord," said I, "this is no manner of behavior."

"I grow fat upon it," he replied; and not merely the words, which were strange enough, but the whole character of his expression shocked me.

"I warn you, my lord, against this indulgency of evil feeling," said I. "I know not to which it is more perilous, the soul or the reason: but you go the way to murder both."

"You can not understand," said he. "You had never such mountains of bitterness upon your heart."

"And if it were no more," I added, "you will surely goad the man to some extremity."

"To the contrary: I am breaking his spirit," says my lord.

Every morning for hard upon a week my lord took his same place upon the bench. It was a pleasant place, under the green acacias, with a sight upon the bay and shipping, and a sound (from some way off) of mariners singing at their employ. Here the two sate without speech or any external movement beyond that of the needle or the Master biting off a thread, for he still clung to his pretense of industry; and here I made a point to join them, wondering at myself and my companions. If any of my lord's friends went by, he would hail them cheerfully, and cry out he was there to give some good advice to his brother, who was now (to his delight) grown quite industrious. And even this the Master accepted with a steady countenance; what was in his mind, God knows, or perhaps Satan only.

All of a sudden, on a still day of what they call the Indian summer, when the woods were changed into gold and pink and scarlet, the Master laid down his needle and burst into a fit of merriment. I think he must have been preparing it a long while in silence, for the note in itself was pretty naturally pitched; but breaking suddenly from so extreme a silence and in circumstances so averse from mirth, it sounded ominously to my ear.

"Henry," said he, "I have for once made a false step, and for once you have had the wit to profit by it. The farce of the cobbler ends to-day; and I confess to you (with my compliments) that you have had the best of it. Blood will out; and you have certainly a choice idea of how to make yourself unpleasant."

Never a word said my lord; it was just as though the Master had not broken silence.

"Come," resumed the Master, "do not be sulky, it will spoil your attitude. You can now afford (believe me) to be a little gracious; for I have not merely a defeat to accept. I had meant to continue this performance till I had gathered enough money for a certain purpose; I confess ingenuously I have not the courage. You naturally desire my absence from this town; I have come round by another way to the same idea. And I have a proposition to make; or if your lordship prefers, a favor to ask."

"Ask it," says my lord.

"You may have heard that I had once in this country a considerable treasure," returned the Master: "it matters not whether or no—such is the fact; and I was obliged to bury it in a spot of which I have sufficient indications. To the recovery of this, has my ambition now come down; and as it is my own you will not grudge it me."

"Go and get it," says my lord. "I make no opposition."

"Yes," said the Master, "but to do so I must find men and carriage. The way is long and rough, and the country infested with wild Indians. Advance me only so much as shall be needful: either as a lump sum, in lieu of my allowance, or if you prefer it as a loan, which I shall repay on my return. And then, if you so decide, you may have seen the last of me."

My lord stared him steadily in the eyes; there was a hard smile upon his face, but he uttered nothing.

"Henry," said the Master, with a formidable quietness, and drawing at the same time somewhat back—"Henry, I had the honor to address you."

"Let us be stepping homeward," says my lord to me, who was plucking at his sleeve; and with that he rose, stretched himself, settled his hat, and still without a syllable of response, began to walk steadily along the shore.

I hesitated a while between the two brothers, so serious a climax did we seem to have reached. But the Master had resumed his occupation, his eyes lowered, his hand seemingly as deft as ever; and I decided to pursue my lord.

"Are you mad?" I cried, so soon as I had overtaken him. "Would you cast away so fair an opportunity?"

"Is it possible you should still believe in him?" inquired my lord, almost with a sneer.

"I wish him forth of this town," I cried. "I wish him anywhere and anyhow but as he is."

"I have said my say," returned my lord, "and you have said yours. There let it rest."

But I was bent on dislodging the Master. That sight of him patiently returning to his needlework was more than my imagination could digest. There was never a man made, and the Master the least of any, that could accept so long a series of insults. The air smelled blood to me. And I vowed there should be no neglect of mine if, through any chink of possibility, crime could be yet turned aside. That same day, therefore, I came to my lord in his business room, where he sat upon some trivial occupation.

"My lord," said I, "I have found a suitable investment for my small economies. But these are unhappily in Scotland; it will take some time to lift them, and the affair presses. Could your lordship see his way to advance me the amount against my note?"

He read me a while with keen eyes. "I have never inquired into the state of your affairs, Mackellar," says he. "Beyond the amount of your caution, you may not be worth a farthing, for what I know."

"I have been a long while in your service, and never told a lie, nor yet asked a favor for myself," said I, "until to-day."

"A favor for the Master," he returned quietly. "Do you take me for a fool, Mackellar? Understand it once and for all; I treat this beast in my own way; fear nor favor shall not move me; and before I am hoodwinked, it will require a trickster less transparent than yourself. I ask service, loyal service; not that you should make and mar behind my back, and steal my own money to defeat me."

"My lord," said I, "these are very unpardonable expressions."

"Think once more, Mackellar," he replied; "and you will see they fit the fact. It is your own subterfuge that is unpardonable. Deny (if you can) that you designed this money to evade my orders with, and I will ask your pardon freely. If you can not, you must have the resolution to hear your conduct go by its own name."

"If you think I had any design but to save you—" I began.

"Oh, my old friend," said he, "you know very well what I think! Here is my hand to you with all my heart; but of money, not one rap."

Defeated upon this side, I went straight to my room, wrote a letter, ran with it to the harbor, for I knew a ship was on the point of sailing; and came to the Master's door a little before dusk. Entering without the form of any knock, I found him sitting with his Indian at a simple meal of maize porridge with some milk. The house within was clean and poor; only a few books upon a shelf distinguished it, and (in one corner) Secundra's little bench.

"Mr. Bally," said I, "I have near five hundred pounds laid by in Scotland, the economies of a hard life. A letter goes by yon ship to have it lifted; have so much patience till the return ship comes in, and it is all yours, upon the same condition you offered to my lord this morning."

He rose from the table, came forward, took me by the shoulders, and looked me in the face, smiling.

"And yet you are very fond of money!" said he. "And yet you love money beyond all things else, except my brother!"

"I fear old age and poverty," said I, "which is another matter."

"I will never quarrel for a name. Call it so!" he replied. "Ah, Mackellar, Mackellar, if this were done from any love to me, how gladly would I close upon your offer!"

"And yet," I eagerly answered, "I say it to my shame, but I can not see you in this poor place without compunction. It is not my single thought, nor my first; and yet it's there! I would gladly see you delivered. I do not offer it in love, and far from that; but as God judges me—and I wonder at it too!—quite without enmity."

"Ah," says he, still holding my shoulders and now gently shaking me, "you think of me more than you suppose. "And I wonder at it too," he added, repeating my expression and I suppose something of my voice. "You are an honest man, and for that cause I spare you."

"Spare me?" I cried.

"Spare you," he repeated, letting me go and turning away. And then fronting me once more: "You little know what I would do with it, Mackellar! Did you think I had swallowed my defeat indeed? Listen: my life has been a series of unmerited cast-backs. That fool, Prince Charlie, mismanaged a most promising affair: there fell my first fortune. In Paris I had my foot once more high upon the ladder: that time it was an accident, a letter came to the wrong hand, and I was bare again. A third time I found my opportunity; I built up a place for myself in India with an infinite patience; and then Clive came, my rajah was swallowed up, and I escaped out of the convulsion, like another Æneas, with Secundra Dass upon my back. Three times I have had my hand upon the highest station; and I am not yet three-and-forty. I know the world as few men know it when they come to die, court and camp, the east and the west; I know where to go. I see a thousand openings. I am now at the height of my resources, sound of health, of inordinate ambition. Well, all this I resign; I care not if I die and the world never hear of me; I care only for one thing, and that I will have. Mind yourself: lest, when the roof falls, you too should be crushed under the ruins."

As I came out of his house, all hope of intervention quite destroyed, I was aware of a stir on the harbor side, and, raising my eyes, there was a great ship newly come to anchor. It seems strange I could have looked upon her with so much indifference, for she brought death to the brothers of Durrisdeer. After all the desperate episodes of this contention, the insults, the opposing interests, the fraternal duel in the shrubbery, it was reserved for some poor devil in Grub Street, scribbling for his dinner and not caring what he scribbled, to cast a spell across four thousand miles of the salt sea, and send forth both these brothers into savage and wintery deserts, there to die. But such a thought was distant from my mind; and while all the provincials were fluttered about me by the unusual animation of their port, I passed throughout their midst on my return homeward, quite absorbed in the recollection of my visit and the Master's speech.

The same night there was brought to us from the ship a little packet of pamphlets. The next day my lord was under engagement to go with the governor upon some party of pleasure; the time was nearly due, and I left him for a moment alone in his room and skimming through the pamphlets. When I returned his head had fallen upon the table, his arms lying abroad among the crumpled papers.

"My lord, my lord!" I cried as I ran forward, for I supposed he was in some fit.

He sprang up like a figure upon wires, his countenance deformed with fury, so that in a strange place I should scarce have known him. His hand at the same time flew above his head as though to strike me down. "Leave me alone!" he screeched; and I fled, as fast as my shaking legs would bear me, for my lady. She too lost no time; but when we returned he had the door locked within, and only cried to us from the other side to leave him be. We looked in each other's faces, very white: each supposing the blow had come at last.

"I will write to the governor to excuse him," says she. "We must keep our strong friends." But when she took up the pen it flew out of her fingers. "I can not write," said she. "Can you?"

"I will make a shift, my lady," said I.

She looked over me as I wrote. "That will do," she said, when I had done. "Thank God, Mackellar, I have you to lean upon! But what can it be now? what, what can it be?"

In my own mind, I believed there was no explanation possible and none required: it was my fear that the man's madness had now simply burst forth its way, like the long-smothered flames of a volcano; but to this (in mere mercy to my lady) I durst not give expression.

"It is more to the purpose to consider our own behavior," said I. "Must we leave him there alone?"

"I do not dare disturb him," she replied. "Nature may know best; it may be nature that cries to be alone; and we grope in the dark. Oh, yes, I would leave him as he is."

"I will then despatch this letter, my lady, and return here, if you please, to sit with you," said I.

"Pray do," cries my lady.

All afternoon we sat together, mostly in silence, watching my lord's door. My own mind was busy with the scene that had just passed, and its singular resemblance to my vision. I must say a word upon this, for the story has gone abroad with great exaggeration, and I have even seen it printed and my own name referred to for particulars. So much was the same: here was my lord in a room, with his head upon the table, and when he raised his face it wore such an expression as distressed me to the soul. But the room was different, my lord's attitude at the table not at all the same, and his face, when he disclosed it, expressed a painful degree of fury instead of that haunting despair which had always (except once, already referred to) characterized it in the vision. There is the whole truth at last before the public; and if the differences be great, the coincidence was yet enough to fill me with uneasiness. All afternoon, as I say, I sat and pondered upon this quite to myself; for my lady had trouble of her own, and it was my last thought to vex her with fancies. About the midst of our time of waiting she conceived an ingenious scheme, had Mr. Alexander fetched and bade him knock at his father's door. My lord sent the boy about his business, but without the least violence whether of manner or expression; so that I began to entertain a hope the fit was over.

At last, as the night fell and I was lighting a lamp that stood there trimmed, the door opened and my lord stood within upon the threshold. The light was not so strong that we could read his countenance; when he spoke methought his voice a little altered but yet perfectly steady.

"Mackellar," said he, "carry this note to its destination with your own hand. It is highly private. Find the person alone when you deliver it."

"Henry," says my lady, "you are not ill?"

"No, no," says he querulously, "I am occupied. Not at all; I am only occupied. It is a singular thing a man must be supposed to be ill when he has any business! Send me supper to this room, and a basket of wine: I expect the visit of a friend. Otherwise I am not to be disturbed."

And with that he once more shut himself in.

The note was addressed to one Captain Harris, at a tavern on the port-side. I knew Harris (by reputation) for a dangerous adventurer, highly suspected of piracy in the past, and now following the rude business of an Indian trader. What my lord should have to say to him, or he to my lord, it passed my imagination to conceive: or yet how my lord had heard of him, unless by a disgraceful trial from which the man was recently escaped. Altogether I went upon the errand with reluctance, and from the little I saw of the captain, returned from it with sorrow. I found him in a foul-smelling chamber, sitting by a guttering candle and an empty bottle; he had the remains of a military carriage, or rather perhaps it was an affectation, for his manners were low.

"Tell my lord, with my service, that I will wait upon his lordship in the inside of half an hour," says he, when he had read the note; and then had the servility, pointing to his empty bottle, to propose that I should buy him liquor.

Although I returned with my best speed, the captain followed close upon my heels, and he stayed late into the night. The cock was crowing a second time when I saw (from my chamber window) my lord lighting him to the gate, both men very much affected with their potations and sometimes leaning one upon the other to confabulate. Yet the next morning my lord was abroad again early with a hundred pounds of money in his pocket. I never supposed that he returned with it; and yet I was quite sure it did not find its way to the Master, for I lingered all morning within view of the booth.

That was the last time my Lord Durrisdeer passed his own enclosure till we left New York; he walked in his barn or sat and talked with his family, all much as usual; but the town saw nothing of him, and his daily visits to the Master seemed forgotten. Nor yet did Harris reappear; or not until the end.

I was now much oppressed with a sense of the mysteries in which we had begun to move. It was plain, if only from his change of habitude, my lord had something on his mind of a grave nature; but what it was, whence it sprang, or why he should now keep the house and garden, I could make no guess at. It was clear, even to probation, the pamphlets had some share in this revolution; I read all I could find, and they were all extremely insignificant and of the usual kind of party scurrility; even to a high politician, I could spy out no particular matter of offense, and my lord was a man rather indifferent on public questions. The truth is, the pamphlet which was the spring of this affair, lay all the time on my lord's bosom. There it was that I found it at last, after he was dead, in the midst of the north wilderness; in such a place, in such dismal circumstances, I was to read for the first time these idle, lying words of a whig pamphleteer declaiming against indulgence to Jacobites: "Another notorious rebel, the *M——r* of *B——e,* is to have his title restored," the passage ran. "This business has been long in hand, since he rendered some very disgraceful services in Scotland and France. His brother, *L——d D——r,* is known to be no better than himself in inclination; and the supposed heir, who is now to be set aside, was bred up in the most detestable principles. In the old phrase, it is *six of the one and half a dozen of the other,* but the favor of such a reposition is too extreme to be passed over." A man in his right wits could not have cared two straws for a tale so manifestly false; that government should ever entertain the notion, was inconceivable to any reasoning creature, unless possibly the fool that penned it; and my lord, though never brilliant, was ever remarkable for sense.

That he should credit such a rodomontade, and carry the pamphlet on his bosom and the words in his heart, is the clear proof of the man's lunacy. Doubtless the mere mention of Mr. Alexander, and the threat directly held out against the child's succession, precipitated that which had so long impended. Or else my master had been truly mad for a long time, and we were too dull or too much used to him, and did not perceive the extent of his infirmity.

About a week after the day of the pamphlets I was late upon the harbor-side, and took a turn toward the Master's, as I often did. The door opened, a flood of light came forth upon the road, and I beheld a man taking his departure with friendly salutations. I can not say how singularly I was shaken to recognize the adventurer Harris. I could not but conclude it was the hand of my lord that had brought him there; and prolonged my walk in very serious and apprehensive thought. It was late when I came home, and there was my lord making up his portmanteau for a voyage.

"Why do you come so late?" he cried. "We leave to-morrow for Albany, you and I together; and it is high time you were about your preparations."

"For Albany, my lord?" I cried. "And for what earthly purpose?"

"Change of scene," said he.

And my lady, who appeared to have been weeping, gave me the signal to obey without more parley. She told me a little later (when we found occasion to exchange some words) that he had suddenly announced his intention after a visit from Captain Harris, and her best endeavors, whether to dissuade him from the journey or to elicit some explanation of its purpose, had alike proved unavailing.

THE JOURNEY IN THE WILDERNESS

WE MADE a prosperous voyage up that fine river of the Hudson, the weather grateful, the hills singularly beautified with the colors of the autumn. At Albany we had our residence at an inn, where I was not so blind and my lord not so cunning but what I could see he had some design to hold me prisoner. The work he found for me to do was not so pressing that we should transact it apart from necessary papers in the chamber of an inn; nor was it of such importance that I should be set upon as many as four or five scrolls of the same document. I submitted in appearance; but I took private measures on my own side, and had the news of the town communicated to me daily by the politeness of our host. In this way I received at last a piece of intelligence for which, I may say, I had been waiting. Captain Harris (I was told) with "Mr. Mountain, the trader," had gone by up the river in a boat. I would have feared the landlord's eye, so strong the sense of some complicity upon my master's part oppressed me. But I made out to say I had some knowledge of the captain, although none of Mr. Mountain, and to inquire who else was of the party. My informant knew not; Mr. Mountain had come ashore upon some needful purchases; had gone round the town buying, drinking and prating; and it seemed the party went upon some likely venture, for he had spoken much of great things he would do when he returned. No more was known, for none of the rest had come ashore, and it seemed they were pressed for time to reach a certain spot before the snow should fall.

And sure enough the next day there fell a sprinkle even in Albany; but it passed as it came, and was but a reminder of what lay before us. I thought of it lightly then, knowing so little as I did of that inclement province; the retrospect is different; and I wonder at times if some of the horror of these events which I must now rehearse flowed not from the foul skies and savage winds to which we were exposed, and the agony of cold that we must suffer.

The boat having passed by, I thought at first we should have left the town. But no such matter. My lord continued his stay in Albany where he had no ostensible affairs, and kept me by him, far from my due employment, and making a pretense of occupation. It is upon this passage I expect, and perhaps deserve censure. I was not so dull but what I had my own thoughts. I could not see the Master entrust himself into the hands of Harris, and not suspect some underhand contrivance. Harris bore a villainous reputation, and he had been tampered with in private by my lord; Mountain, the trader, proved, upon inquiry, to be another of the same kidney; the errand they were all gone upon being the recovery of ill-gotten treasures, offered in itself a very strong incentive to foul play; and the character of the country where they journeyed promised impunity to deeds of blood. Well, it is true I had all these thoughts and fears, and guesses of the Master's fate. But you are to consider I was the same man that sought to dash him from the bulwarks of a ship in the mid-sea; the same that, a little before, very impiously but sincerely offered God a bargain, seeking to hire God to be my bravo. It is true again that I had a good deal melted toward our enemy. But this I always thought of as a weakness of the flesh and even culpable; my mind remaining steady and quite bent against him. True yet again that it was one thing to assume on my own shoulders the guilt and danger of a criminal attempt, and another to stand by and see my lord imperil and besmirch himself. But this was the very ground of my inaction. For (should I any way stir in the business) I might fail indeed to save the Master, but I could not miss to make a byword of my lord.

Thus it was that I did nothing; and upon the same reasons, I am still strong to justify my course. We lived meanwhile in Albany; but though alone together in a strange place, had little traffic beyond formal salutations. My lord had carried with him several introductions to chief people of the town and neighborhood; others he had before encountered in New York; with this consequence, that he went much abroad, and I am sorry to say was altogether too convivial in his habits. I was often in bed, but never asleep, when he returned; and there was scarce a night when he did not betray the influence of liquor. By day he would still lay upon me endless tasks, which he showed considerable ingenuity to fish up and to renew. in the manner of Penelope's web. I never refused, as I say, for I was hired to do his bidding; but I took no pains to keep my penetration under a bushel, and would sometimes smile in his face.

"I think I must be the devil, and you Michael Scott," I said to him one day. "I have bridged Tweed and split the Eildons; and now you set me to the rope of sand."

He looked at me with shining eyes and looked away again, his jaw chewing; but without words.

"Well, well, my lord," said I, "your will is my pleasure. I will do this thing for the fourth time; but I would beg of you to invent another task against to-morrow, for by my troth, I am weary of this one."

"You do not know what you are saying," returned my lord, putting on his hat and turning his back to me. "It is a strange thing you should take a pleasure to annoy me. A friend—but that is a different affair. It is a strange thing. I am a man that has had ill-fortune all my life through. I am still surrounded by contrivances. I am always treading in plots," he burst out. "The whole world is banded against me."

"I would not talk wicked nonsense if I were you," said I; "but I will tell you what I *would* do—I would put my head in cold water, for you had more last night than you could carry."

"Do you think that?" said he, with a manner of interest highly awakened. "Would that be good for me? It's a thing I never tried."

"I mind the days when you had no call to try, and I wish, my lord, that they were back again," said I. "But the plain truth is, if you continue to exceed, you will do yourself a mischief."

"I don't appear to carry drink the way I used to," said my lord. "I get overtaken, Mackellar. But I will be more upon my guard."

"That is what I would ask of you," I replied. "You are to bear in mind that you are Mr. Alexander's father; give the bairn a chance to carry his name with some responsibility."

"Ay, ay," said he. "Ye're a very sensible man, Mackellar, and have been long in my employ. But I think if you have nothing more to say to me, I will be stepping. If you have nothing more to say?" he added, with that burning, childish eagerness that was now so common with the man.

"No, my lord, I have nothing more," said I, dryly enough.

"Then I think I will be stepping," says my lord, and stood and looked at me fidgeting with his hat, which he had taken off again. "I suppose you will have no errands? No. I am to meet Sir William Johnson, but I will be more upon my guard." He was silent for a time, and then, smiling: "Do you call to mind a place, Mackellar—it's a little below Engles—where the burn runs very deep under a wood of rowans? I mind being there when I was a lad—dear, it comes over me like an old song! I was after the fishing, and I made a bonny cast. Eh, but I was happy. I wonder, Mackellar, why I am never happy now?"

"My lord," said I, "if you would drink with more moderation you would have the better chance. It is an old byword that the bottle is a false consoler."

"No doubt," said he, "no doubt. Well, I think I will be going."

"Good morning, my lord," said I.

"Good morning, good morning," said he, and so got himself at last from the apartment.

I give that for a fair specimen of my lord in the morning; and I must have described my patron very ill if the reader does not perceive a notable falling off. To behold the man thus fallen; to know him accepted among his companions for a poor, muddled toper, welcome (if he were welcome at all) for the bare consideration of his title; and to recall the virtues he had once displayed against such odds of fortune; was not this a thing at once to rage and to be humbled at?

In his cups, he was more excessive. I will give but the one scene, close upon the end, which is strongly marked upon my memory to this day, and at the time affected me almost with horror.

I was in bed, lying there awake, when I heard him stumbling on the stair and singing. My lord had no gift of music, his brother had all the graces of the family, so that when I say singing, you are to understand a manner of high, caroling utterance, which was truly neither speech nor song. Something not unlike is to be heard upon the lips of children, ere they learn shame; from those of a man grown elderly it had a strange effect. He opened the door with noisy precaution; peered in, shading his candle; conceived me to slumber; entered, set his light upon the table, and took off his hat. I saw him very plain; a high, feverish exultation appeared to broil in his veins, and he stood and smiled and smirked upon the candle. Presently he lifted up his arm, snapped his fingers, and fell to undress. As he did so, having once more forgot my presence, he took back to his singing; and now I could hear the words, which were those from the old song of the "Twa Corbies" endlessly repeated:

"And over his banes when they are bare
The wind sall blaw for evermair!"

I have said there was no music in the man. His strains had no logical succession except in so far as they inclined a little to the minor mode; but they exercised a rude potency upon the feelings, and followed the words, and signified the feelings of the singer with barbaric fitness. He took it first in the time and manner of a rant; presently this ill-favored gleefulness abated, he began to dwell upon the notes more feelingly, and sank at last into a degree of maudlin pathos that was to me scarce bearable. By equal steps, the original briskness of his acts declined; and when he was stripped to his breeches he sat on the bedside and fell to whimpering. I know nothing less respectable than the tears of drunkenness, and turned my back impatiently on this poor sight.

But he had started himself (I am to suppose) on that slippery descent of self-pity; on the which, to a man unstrung by old sorrows and recent potations, there is no arrest except exhaustion. His tears continued to flow, and the man to sit there, three parts naked, in the cold air of the chamber. I twitted myself alternately with inhumanity and sentimental weakness, now half rising in my bed to interfere, now reading myself lessons of indifference and courting slumber, until, upon a sudden, the *quantum mutatus ab illo* shot into my mind; and recalling to remembrance his old wisdom, constancy, and patience, I was overborne with a pity almost approaching the passionate, not for my master alone but for the sons of man.

At this I leaped from my place, went over to his side and laid a hand on his bare shoulder, which was cold as stone. He uncovered his face and showed it me all swollen and begrutten[1] like a child's; and at the sight my impatience partially revived.

"Think shame to yourself," said I. "This is bairnly conduct. I might have been sniveling myself, if I had cared to swill my belly with wine. But I went to my bed sober like a man. Come; get into yours, and have done with this pitiable exhibition."

"Oh, Mackellar," said he, "my heart is wae!"

"Wae?" cried I. "For a good cause, I think. What words were these you sang as you came in? Show pity to others, we then can talk of pity to yourself. You can be the one thing or the other, but I will be no party to halfway houses. If you're a striker, strike, and if you're a bleater, bleat!"

"Cry!" cries he, with a burst, "that's it—strike! that's talking! Man, I've stood it all too long. But when they laid a hand upon the child, when the child's threatened" —his momentary vigor whimpering off—"my child, my Alexander!"—and he was at his tears again.

I took him by the shoulders and shook him. "Alexander!" said I. "Do you even think of him? Not you! Look yourself in the face like a brave man, and you'll find you're but a self-deceiver. The wife, the friend, the child, they're all equally forgot, and you sunk in a mere bog of selfishness."

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[1] Tear-marked.

"Mackellar," said he, with a wonderful return to his old manner and appearance, "you may say what you will of me, but one thing I never was—I was never selfish."

"I will open your eyes in your despite," said I. "How long have we been here? and how often have you written to your family? I think this is the first time you were ever separate; have you written at all? Do they know if you are dead or living?"

I had caught him here too openly; it braced his better nature; there was no more weeping, he thanked me very penitently, got to bed and was soon fast asleep; and the first thing he did the next morning was to sit down and begin a letter to my lady; a very tender letter it was too, though it was never finished. Indeed all communication with New York was transacted by myself; and it will be judged I had a thankless task of it. What to tell my lady and in what words, and how far to be false and how far cruel, was a thing that kept me often from my slumber.

All this while, no doubt, my lord waited with growing impatience for news of his accomplices. Harris, it is to be thought, had promised a high degree of expedition; the time was already overpast when word was to be looked for; and suspense was a very evil counselor to a man of an impaired intelligence. My lord's mind throughout this interval dwelt almost wholly in the wilderness, following that party with whose deeds he had so much concern. He continually conjured up their camps and progresses, the fashion of the country, the perpetration in a thousand different manners of the same horrid fact, and that consequent spectacle of the Master's bones lying scattered in the wind. These private, guilty considerations I would continually observe to peep forth in the man's talk, like rabbits from a hill. And it is the less wonder if the scene of his meditations began to draw him bodily.

It is well known what pretext he took. Sir William

Johnson had a diplomatic errand in these parts; and my lord and I (from curiosity, as was given out) went in his company. Sir William was well attended and liberally supplied. Hunters brought us venison, fish was taken for us daily in the streams, and brandy ran like water. We proceeded by day and encamped by night in the military style; sentinels were set and changed; every man had his named duty; and Sir William was the spring of all. There was much in this that might at times have entertained me; but for our misfortune, the weather was extremely harsh, the days were in the beginning open, but the nights frosty from the first. A painful keen wind blew most of the time, so that we sat in the boat with blue fingers, and at night, as we scorched our faces at the fire, the clothes upon our back appeared to be of paper. A dreadful solitude surrounded our steps; the land was quite dispeopled, there was no smoke of fires, and save for a single boat of merchants on the second day, we met no travelers. The season was indeed late, but this desertion of the waterways impressed Sir William himself; and I have heard him more than once express a sense of intimidation. "I have come too late I fear; they must have dug up the hatchet," he said; and the future proved how justly he had reasoned.

I could never depict the blackness of my soul upon this journey. I have none of those minds that are in love with the unusual: to see the winter coming and to lie in the field so far from any house, oppressed me like a nightmare; it seemed, indeed, a kind of awful braving of God's power; and this thought, which I dare say only writes me down a coward, was greatly exaggerated by my private knowledge of the errand we were come upon. I was besides encumbered by my duties to Sir William, whom it fell upon me to entertain; for my lord was quite sunk into a state bordering on *pervigilium,* watching the woods with a rapt eye, sleeping scarce at all, and speaking sometimes not twenty words in a whole day. That which he said was still coherent; but it turned almost invariably upon the party for whom he kept his crazy lookout. He would tell Sir William often, and always as if it were a new communication, that he had "a brother somewhere in the woods," and beg that the sentinels should be directed "to inquire for him." "I am anxious for news of my brother," he would say. And sometimes, when we were under way, he would fancy he spied a canoe far off upon the water or a camp on the shore, and exhibit painful agitation. It was impossible but Sir William should be struck with these singularities; and at last he led me aside, and hinted his uneasiness. I touched my head and shook it; quite rejoiced to prepare a little testimony against possible disclosures.

"But in that case," cries Sir William, "is it wise to let him go at large?"

"Those that know him best," said I, "are persuaded that he should be humored."

"Well, well," replied Sir William, "it is none of my affairs. But if I had understood, you would never have been here."

Our advance into this savage country had thus uneventfully proceeded for about a week when we encamped for a night at a place where the river ran among considerable mountains clothed in wood. The fires were lighted on a level space at the water's edge; and we supped and lay down to sleep in the customary fashion. It chanced the night fell murderously cold; the stringency of the frost seized and bit me through my coverings, so that pain kept me wakeful; and I was afoot again before the peep of day, crouching by the fires or trotting to and fro at the stream's edge, to combat the aching of my limbs. At last dawn began to break upon hoar woods and mountains, the sleepers rolled in their robes, and the boisterous river dashing among spears of ice. I stood looking about me, swaddled in my stiff coat of a bull's fur, and the breath smoking from my scorched nostrils, when, upon a sudden, a singular, eager cry rang from the borders of the wood. The sentries answered it, the sleepers sprang to their feet; one pointed, the rest followed his direction with their eyes, and there, upon the edge of the forest and between two trees, we beheld the figure of a man reaching forth his hands like one in ecstasy. The next moment he ran forward, fell on his knees at the side of the camp, and burst into tears.

This was John Mountain, the trader, escaped from the most horrid perils; and his first word, when he got speech, was to ask if we had seen Secundra Dass.

"Seen what?" cries Sir William.

"No," said I, "we have seen nothing of him. Why?"

"Nothing?" says Mountain. "Then I was right after all." With that he struck his palm upon his brow. "But what takes him back?" he cried. "What takes the man back among dead bodies? There is some damned mystery here."

This was a word which highly aroused our curiosity, but I shall be more perspicacious if I narrate these incidents in their true order. Here follows a narrative which I have compiled out of three sources, not very consistent in all points:

First, a written statement by Mountain, in which everything criminal is cleverly smuggled out of view.

Second, two conversations with Secundra Dass; and

Third, many conversations with Mountain himself, in which he was pleased to be entirely plain; for the truth is he regarded me as an accomplice.

NARRATIVE OF THE TRADER, MOUNTAIN

The crew that went up the river under the joint command of Captain Harris and the Master numbered in all nine persons, of whom (if I except Secundra Dass) there was not one that had not merited the gallows. From Harris downward the voyagers were notorious in that colony for desperate, bloody-minded miscreants; some were reputed pirates, the most hawkers of rum; all ranters and drinkers; all fit associates, embarking together without remorse, upon this treacherous and murderous design. I could not hear there was much discipline or any set captain in the gang; but Harris and four others, Mountain himself, two Scotchmen—Pinkerton and Hastie—and a man of the name of Hicks, a drunken shoemaker, put their heads together and agreed upon the course. In a material sense, they were well enough provided; and the Master in particular brought with him a tent where he might enjoy some privacy and shelter.

Even this small indulgence told against him in the minds of his companions. But indeed he was in a position so entirely false (and even ridiculous) that all his habit of command and arts of pleasing were here thrown away. In the eyes of all, except Secundra Dass, he figured as a common gull and designated victim; going unconsciously to death; yet he could not but suppose himself the contriver and the leader of the expedition; he could scarce help but so conduct himself; and at the least hint of authority or condescension, his deceivers would be laughing in their sleeves. I was so used to see and to conceive him in a high, authoritative attitude that when I had conceived his position on this journey I was pained and could have blushed. How soon he may have entertained a first surmise we can not know; but it was long, and the party had advanced into the wilderness beyond the reach of any help ere he was fully awakened to the truth.

It fell thus. Harris and some others had drawn apart into the woods for consultation, when they were startled by a rustling in the brush. They were all accustomed to the arts of Indian warfare, and Mountain had not only lived and hunted, but fought and earned some reputation with the savages. He could move in the woods without noise, and follow a trail like a hound; and upon the emergence of this alert, he was deputed by the rest to plunge into the thicket for intelligence. He was soon convinced there was a man in his close neighborhood, moving with precaution but without art among the leaves and branches; and coming shortly to a place of advantage, he was able to observe Secundra Dass crawling briskly off with many backward glances. At this he knew not whether to laugh or cry; and his accomplices, when he had returned and reported, were in much the same dubiety. There was now no danger of an Indian onslaught; but on the other hand, since Secundra Dass was at the pains to spy upon them, it was highly probable he knew English, and if he knew English it was certain the whole of their design was in the Master's knowledge. There was one singularity in the position. If Secundra Dass knew and concealed his knowledge of English, Harris was a proficient in several of the tongues of India, and as his career in that part of the world had been a great deal worse than profligate, he had not thought proper to remark upon the circumstance. Each side had thus a spy-hole on the counsels of the other. The plotters, so soon as this advantage was explained, returned to camp; Harris, hearing the Hindustani was once more closeted with his Master, crept to the side of the tent; and the rest, sitting about the fire with their tobacco, awaited his report with impatience. When he came at last his face was very black. He had overheard enough to confirm the worst of his suspicions. Secundra Dass was a good English scholar; he had been some days creeping and listening, the Master was now fully informed of the conspiracy, and the pair proposed on the morrow to fall out of line at a carrying place and plunge at a venture in the woods: preferring the full risk of famine, savage beasts, and savage men to their position in the midst of traitors.

What, then, was to be done? Some were for killing the Master on the spot; but Harris assured them that would be a crime without profit, since the secret of the treasure must die along with him that buried it. Others were for desisting at once from the whole enterprise and making for New York; but the appetizing name of treasure, and the thought of the long way they had already traveled, dissuaded the majority. I imagine they were dull fellows for the most part. Harris, indeed, had some acquirements, Mountain was no fool, Hastie was an educated man; but even these had manifestly failed in life, and the rest were the dregs of colonial rascality. The conclusion they reached, at least, was more the offspring of greed and hope than reason. It was to temporize, to be wary and watch the Master, to be silent and supply no further aliment to his suspicions, and to depend entirely (as well as I make out) on the chance that their victim was as greedy, hopeful, and irrational as themselves, and might, after all, betray his life and treasure.

Twice, in the course of the next day, Secundra and the

Master must have appeared to themselves to have escaped; and twice they were circumvented. The Master, save that the second time he grew a little pale, displayed no sign of disappointment, apologized for the stupidity with which he had fallen aside, thanked his recapturers as for a service, and rejoined the caravan with all his usual gallantry and cheerfulness of mien and bearing. But it is certain he had smelled a rat; for from thenceforth he and Secundra spoke only in each other's ear, and Harris listened and shivered by the tent in vain. The same night it was announced they were to leave the boats and proceed by foot; a circumstance which (as it put an end to the confusion of the portages) greatly lessened the chances of escape.

And now there began between the two sides a silent contest, for life on the one hand, for riches on the other. They were now near that quarter of the desert in which the Master himself must begin to play the part of guide; and using this for a pretext of prosecution, Harris and his men sat with him every night about the fire, and labored to entrap him into some admission. If he let slip his secret, he knew well it was the warrant for his death; on the other hand, he durst not refuse their questions, and must appear to help them to the best of his capacity, or he practically published his mistrust. And yet Mountain assures me the man's brow was never ruffled. He sat in the midst of these jackals, his life depending by a thread, like some easy, witty householder at home by his own fire; an answer he had for everything—as often as not, a jesting answer; avoided threats, evaded insults; talked, laughed, and listened with an open countenance; and, in short, conducted himself in such a manner as must have disarmed suspicion, and went near to stagger knowledge. Indeed Mountain confessed to me they would soon have disbelieved the captain's story, and supposed their designated victim still quite innocent of their designs, but for the fact that he continued (however ingeniously) to give the slip to questions, and the yet stronger confirmation of his repeated efforts to escape. The last of these, which brought things to a head, I am now to relate. And first I should say that by this time the temper of Harris's companions was utterly worn out; civility was scarce pretended; and for one very significant circumstance, the Master and Secundra had been (on some pretext) deprived of weapons. On their side, however, the threatened pair kept up the parade of friendship handsomely; Secundra was all bows, the Master all smiles; and on the last night of the truce he had even gone so far as to sing for the diversion of the company. It was observed that he had also eaten with unusual heartiness, and drank deep: doubtless from design.

At least, about three in the morning, he came out of the tent into the open air, audibly mourning and complaining, with all the manner of a sufferer from surfeit. For some while Secundra publicly attended on his patron, who at last became more easy, and fell asleep on the frosty ground behind the tent: the Indian returning within. Some time after the sentry was changed; had the Master pointed out to him, where he lay in what is called a robe of buffalo; and thenceforth kept an eye upon him (he declared) without remission. With the first of the dawn, a draft of wind came suddenly and blew open one side the corner of the robe; and with the same puff, the Master's hat whirled in the air and fell some yards away.

The sentry, thinking it remarkable the sleeper should not awaken, thereupon drew near: and the next moment, with a great shout, informed the camp their prisoner was escaped. He had left behind his Indian, who (in the first vivacity of the surprise) came near to pay the forfeit of his life, and was, in fact, inhumanly mishandled; but Secundra, in the midst of threats and cruelties, stuck to it with extraordinary loyalty that he was quite ignorant of his Master's plans, which might indeed be true, and of the manner of his escape, which was demonstrably false. Nothing was therefore left to the conspirators but to rely entirely on the skill of Mountain. The night had been frosty, the ground quite hard; and the sun was no sooner up than a strong thaw set in. It was Mountain's boast that few men could have followed that trail, and still fewer (even of the native Indians) found it. The Master had thus a long start before his pursuers had the scent, and he must have traveled with surprising energy for a pedestrian so unused, since it was near noon before Mountain had a view of him.

At this conjuncture the trader was alone, all his companions following, at his own request, several hundred yards in the rear; he knew the Master was unarmed; his heart was besides heated with the exercise and lust of hunting; and seeing the quarry so close, so defenseless, and seemingly so fatigued, he vaingloriously determined to effect the capture with his single hand. A step or two further brought him to one margin of a little clearing; on the other, with his arms folded and his back to a huge stone, the Master sat. It is possible Mountain may have made a rustle, it is certain, at least, the Master raised his head and gazed directly at that quarter of the thicket where his hunter lay. "I could not be sure he saw me," Mountain said; "he just looked my way like a man with his mind made up, and all the courage ran out of me like rum out of a bottle." And presently, when the Master looked away again, and appeared to resume those meditations in which he had sat immersed before the trader's coming, Mountain slunk stealthily back and returned to seek the help of his companions.

And now began the chapter of surprises, for the scout had scarce informed the others of his discovery, and they were yet preparing their weapons for a rush upon the fugitive, when the man himself appeared in their midst, walking openly and quietly, with his hands behind his back.

"Ah, men!" says he, on his beholding them. "Here is a fortunate encounter. Let us get back to camp."

Mountain had not mentioned his own weakness or the Master's disconcerting gaze upon the thicket, so that (with all the rest) his return appeared spontaneous. For all that, a hubbub arose; oaths flew, fists were shaken, and guns pointed.

"Let us get back to camp," said the Master. "I have an explanation to make, but it must be laid before you all. And in the mean while I would put up these weapons, one of which might very easily go off and blow away your hopes of treasure. I would not kill," says he, smiling, "the goose with the golden eggs."

The charm of his superiority once more triumphed; and the party, in no particular order, set off on their return. By the way he found occasion to get a word or two apart with Mountain.

"You are a clever fellow and a bold," says he, "but I am not so sure that you are doing yourself justice. I would have you to consider whether you would not do better, ay, and safer, to serve me instead of serving so commonplace a rascal as Mr. Harris. Consider of it," he concluded, dealing the man a gentle tap upon the shoulder, "and don't be in haste. Dead or alive, you will find me an ill man to quarrel with."

When they were come back to the camp, where Harris and Pinkerton stood guard over Secundra, these two ran upon the Master like viragoes, and were amazed out of measure when they were bidden by their comrades to "stand back and hear what the gentleman had to say." The Master had not flinched before their onslaught; nor, at this proof of the ground he had gained, did he betray the least sufficiency.

"Do not let us be in haste," says he. "Meat first and public speaking after."

With that they made a hasty meal; and as soon as it was done, the Master, leaning on one elbow, began his speech. He spoke long, addressing himself to each except Harris, finding for each (with the same exception) some particular flattery. He called them "bold, honest blades," declared he had never seen a more jovial company, work better done, or pains more merrily supported. "Well, then," says he, "some one asks me 'Why the devil I ran away?' But that is scarce worth answer, for I think you all know pretty well. But you know only pretty well: that is a point I shall arrive at presently, and be you ready to remark it when it comes. There is a traitor here: a double traitor: I will give you his name before I am done; and let that suffice for now. But here comes some other gentleman and asks me 'Why in the devil I came back?' Well, before I answer that question, I have one to put to you. It was this cur here, this Harris, that speaks Hindustani?" cries he, rising on one knee and pointing fair at the man's face, with a gesture indescribably menacing; and when he had been answered in the affirmative, "Ah!" says he, "then are all my suspicions verified, and I did rightly to come back. Now, men, hear the truth for the first time." Thereupon he launched forth in a long story, told with extraordinary skill how he had all along suspected Harris, how he had found the confirmation of his fears and how Harris must have misrepresented what passed between Secundra and himself. At this point he made a bold stroke with excellent effect. "I suppose," says he, "you think you are going shares with Harris, I suppose you think you will see to that yourselves; you would naturally not think so flat a rogue could cozen you. But have a care! These half idiots have a sort of cunning, as the skunk has its stench; and it may be news to you that Harris has taken care of himself already. Yes, for him the treasure is all money in the bargain. You must find it or go starve. But he has been paid beforehand; my brother paid him to destroy me; look at him, if you doubt—look at him, grinning and gulping, a detected thief!" Thence, having made this happy impression, he explained how he had escaped, and thought better of it, and at last concluded to come back, lay the truth before the company, and take his chance with them once more: persuaded, as he was, they would instantly depose Harris and elect some other leader. "There is the whole truth," said he; "and with one exception, I put myself entirely in your hands. What is the exception? There he sits," he cried, pointing once more to Harris; "a man that has to die! Weapons and conditions are all one to me; put me face to face with him, and if you give me nothing but a stick, in five minutes I will show you a sop of broken carrion fit for dogs to roll in."

It was dark night when he made an end; they had listened in almost perfect silence; but the firelight scarce permitted any one to judge, from the look of his neighbors, with what result of persuasion or conviction. Indeed, the Master had set himself in the brightest place, and kept his face there, to be the center of men s eyes: doubtless on a profound calculation. Silence followed for awhile, and presently the whole party became involved in disputation: the Master lying on his back with his hands knit under his head and one knee flung across the other, like a person unconcerned in the result. And here, I dare say, his bravado carried him too far and prejudiced his case. At least, after a cast or two backward and forward, opinion settled finally against him. It's possible he hoped to repeat the business of the pirate ship, and he himself, perhaps, on hard enough conditions, elected leader; and things went so far that way that Mountain actually threw out the proposition. But the rock he split upon was Hastie. This fellow was not well liked, being sour and slow, with an ugly, glowering disposition, but he had studied some time for the Church at Edinburgh College, before ill conduct had destroyed his prospects, and he now remembered and applied what he had learned. Indeed, he had not proceeded very far, when the Master rolled carelessly upon one side, which was done (in Mountain's opinion) to conceal the beginnings of despair upon his countenance. Hastie dismissed the most of what they had heard as nothing to the matter: what they wanted was the treasure. All that was said of Harris might be true, and they would have to see to that in time. But what had that to do with the treasure? They had heard a vast of words; but the truth was just this, that Mr. Durie was damnably frightened and had several times run off. Here he was—whether caught or come back was all one to Hastie: the point was to make an end of the business. As for the talk of deposing and electing captains, he hoped they were all free men and could attend their own affairs. That was dust flung in their eyes, and so was the proposal to fight Harris. "He shall fight no one in this camp, I can tell him that," said Hastie. "We had trouble enough to get his arms away from him, and we should look pretty fools to give them back again. But if it's excitement the gentleman is after, I can supply him with more than perhaps he cares about. For I have no intention to spend the remainder of my life in these mountains; already I have been too long; and I propose that he shall immediately tell us where that treasure is, or else immediately be shot. And there," says he, producing his weapon, "there is the pistol that I mean to use."

"Come, I call you a man," cries the Master, sitting up and looking at the speaker with an air of admiration.

"I didn't ask you to call me anything," returned Hastie; "what is it to be?"

"That's an idle question," said the Master. "Needs must when the devil drives. The truth is we are within easy walk of the place, and I will show it you to-morrow."

With that, as if all were quite settled, and settled exactly to his mind, he walked off to his tent, whither Secundra had preceded him.

I can not think of these last turns and wriggles of my old enemy except with admiration; scarce even pity is mingled with the sentiment, so strongly the man supported, so boldly resisted his misfortunes. Even at that hour, when he perceived himself quite lost, when he saw he had but effected an exchange of enemies, and overthrown Harris to set Hastie up, no sign of weakness appeared in his behavior, and he withdrew to his tent, already determined (I must suppose) upon affronting the incredible hazard of his last expedient with the same easy, assured, genteel expression and demeanor as he might have left a theater withal to join a supper of the wits. But doubtless within, if we could see there, his soul trembled.

Early in the night, word went about the camp that he was sick; and the first thing the next morning he called Hastie to his side, and inquired most anxiously if he had any skill in medicine. As a matter of fact, this was a vanity of that fallen divinity student's to which he had cunningly addressed himself. Hastie examined him; and being flattered, ignorant, and highly suspicious, knew not in the last whether the man was sick or malingering. In this state, he went forth again to his companions; and (as the thing which would give himself most consequence either way) announced that the patient was in a fair way to die.

"For all that," he added, with an oath, "and if he bursts by the wayside, he must bring us this morning to the treasure."

But there were several in the camp (Mountain among the number) whom this brutality revolted. They would have seen the Master pistoled, or pistoled him themselves, without the smallest sentiment of pity; but they seem to have been touched by his gallant fight and unequivocal defeat the night before; perhaps, too, they were even already beginning to oppose themselves to their new leader; at least, they now declared that (if the man was sick) he should have a day's rest in spite of Hastie's teeth.

The next morning he was manifestly worse, and Hastie himself began to display something of humane concern, so easily does even the pretense of doctoring awaken sympathy. The third, the Master called Mountain and Hastie to the tent, announced himself to be dying, gave them full particulars as to the position of the cache, and begged them to set out incontinently on the quest, so that they might see if he deceived them, and (if they were at first unsuccessful), he should be able to correct their error.

But here arose a difficulty on which he doubtless counted. None of these men would trust another, none would consent to stay behind. On the other hand, although the Master seemed extremely low, spoke scarce above a whisper, and lay much of the time insensible, it was still possible it was a fraudulent sickness; and if all went treasure hunting it might prove they had gone upon a wild-goose chase, and return to find their prisoner flown. They concluded, therefore, to hang idling round the camp, alleging sympathy to their reason; and certainly, so mingled are our dispositions, several were sincerely (if not very deeply) affected by the natural peril of the man whom they callously designed to murder. In the afternoon Hastie was called to the bedside to pray: the which (incredible as it must appear) he did with unction; about eight at night the wailing of Secundra announced that all was over, and before ten the Indian, with a link stuck in the ground, was toiling at the grave. Sunrise of next day beheld the Master's burial, all hands attending with great decency of demeanor; and the body was laid in the earth wrapped in a fur robe, with only the face uncovered; which last was of a waxy whiteness, and had the nostrils plugged according to some Oriental habit of Secundra's. No sooner was the grave filled than the lamentations of the Indian once more struck concern to every heart; and it appears this gang of murderers, so far from resenting his outcries, although both distressful and (in such a country) perilous to their own safety, roughly but kindly endeavored to console him.

But if human nature is even in the worst of men occasionally kind, it is still, and before all things, greedy; and they soon turned from the mourner to their own concerns. The cache of the treasure being hard by, although yet unidentified, it was concluded not to break camp; and the day passed, on the part of the voyagers, in unavailing exploration of the woods, Secundra the while lying on his master's grave. That night they placed no sentinel, but lay all together about the fire, in the customary woodman fashion, the heads outward, like the spokes of a wheel. Morning found them in the same disposition; only Pinkerton, who lay on Mountain's right, between him and Hastie, had (in the hours of darkness) been secretly butchered, and there lay, still wrapped as to his body in his mantle, but offering above that ungodly and horrific spectacle of the scalped head. The gang were that morning as pale as a company of phantoms, for the pertinacity of Indian war (or, to speak more correctly, Indian murder), was well known to all. But they laid the chief blame on their unsentineled posture; and fired with the neighborhood of the treasure, determined to continue where they were. Pinkerton was buried hard by the Master; the survivors again passed the day in exploration, and returned in a mingled humor of anxiety and hope, being partly certain they were now close on the discovery of what they sought, and on the other hand (with the return of darkness) were infected with the fear of Indians. Mountain was the first sentry; he declares he neither slept nor yet sat down, but kept his watch with a perpetual and straining vigilance, and it was even with unconcern that (when he saw by the stars his time was up) he drew near the fire to waken his successor. This man (it was Hicks the shoemaker) slept on the lee side of the circle, somewhat further off in consequence than those to windward, and in a place darkened by the blowing smoke. Mountain stooped and took him by the shoulder; his hand was at once smeared by some adhesive wetness; and (the wind at the moment veering) the firelight shone upon the sleeper and showed him, like Pinkerton, dead and scalped.

It was clear they had fallen in the hands of one of those matchless Indian bravos that will sometimes follow a party for days, and in spite of indefatigable travel and unsleeping watch, continue to keep up with their advance and steal a scalp at every resting-place. Upon this discovery the treasure seekers, already reduced to a poor half dozen, fell into mere dismay, seized a few necessaries, and deserting the remainder of their goods, fled outright into the forest. Their fire, they left still burning, and their dead comrade unburied. All day they ceased not to flee, eating by the way, from hand to mouth; and since they feared to sleep, continued to advance at random even in the hours of darkness. But the limit of man's endurance is soon reached; when they rested at last, it was to sleep profoundly; and when they woke, it was to find that the enemy was still upon their heels, and death and mutilation had once more lessened and deformed their company.

By this, they had become light-headed, they had quite missed their path in the wilderness, their stores were already running low. With the further horrors, it is superfluous that I should swell this narrative, already too prolonged. Suffice it to say, that when at length a night passed by innocuous, and they might breathe again in the hope that the murderer had at last desisted from pursuit, Mountain and Secundra were alone. The trader is firmly persuaded their unseen enemy was some warrior of his own acquaintance, and that he himself was spared by favor. The mercy extended to Secundra he explains on the ground that the East Indian was thought to be insane; partly from the fact that, through all the horrors of the flight and while others were casting away their very food and weapons, Secundra continued to stagger forward with a mattock on his shoulder; and partly because in the last days and with a great degree of heat and fluency, he perpetually spoke with himself in his own language. But he was sane enough when it came to English.

"You think he will be gone quite away?" he asked, upon their blessed awakening in safety.

"I pray God so, I believe so, I dare to believe so," Mountain had replied almost with incoherence as he described the scene to me.

And indeed he was so much distempered that until he met us the next morning he could scarce be certain whether he had dreamed, or whether it was a fact, that Secundra had thereupon turned directly about and returned without a word upon their footprints, setting his face for these wintry and hungry solitudes, along a path whose every stage was mile-stoned with a mutilated corpse.

THE JOURNEY IN THE WILDERNESS
(*continued*)

MOUNTAIN'S story, as it was laid before Sir William Johnson and my lord, was shorn, of course, of all the earlier particulars, and the expedition described to have proceeded uneventfully, until the Master sickened. But the latter part was very forcibly related, the speaker visibly thrilling to his recollections; and our then situation, on the fringe of the same desert, and the private interests of each, gave him an audience prepared to share in his emotions. For Mountain's intelligence not only changed the world for my Lord Durrisdeer, but materially affected the designs of Sir William Johnson.

These I find I must lay more at length before the reader. Word had reached Albany of dubious import; it had been rumored some hostility was to be put in act; and the Indian diplomatist had, thereupon, sped into the wilderness, even at the approach of winter, to nip that mischief in the bud. Here, on the borders, he learned that he was come too late; and a difficult choice was thus presented to a man (upon the whole) not any more bold than prudent. His standing with the painted braves may be compared to that of my Lord President Culloden among the chiefs of our own Highlanders at the '45; that is as much as to say, he was, to these men, reason's only speaking trumpet, and counsels of peace and moderation, if they were to prevail at all, must prevail singly through his influence. If, then, he should return, the province must lie open to all the abominable tragedies of Indian war—the houses blaze, the wayfarer be cut off, and the men of the woods collect their usual disgusting spoil of human scalps. On the other side, to go further forth, to risk so small a party deeper in the desert to carry words of peace among warlike savages already rejoicing to return to war: here was an extremity from which it was easy to perceive his mind revolted.

"I have come too late," he said more than once, and would fall into a deep consideration, his head bowed in his hands, his foot patting the ground.

At length he raised his face and looked upon us, that is to say, upon my lord, Mountain, and myself, sitting close round a small fire, which had been made for privacy in one corner of the camp.

"My lord, to be quite frank with you, I find myself in two minds," said he. "I think it very needful I should go on, but not at all proper I should any longer enjoy the pleasure of your company. We are here still upon the waterside; and I think the risk to southward no great matter. Will not yourself and Mr. Mackellar take a single boat's crew and return to Albany?"

My lord, I should say, had listened to Mountain's narrative, regarding him throughout with a painful intensity of gaze; and since the tale concluded, had sat as in a dream. There was something very daunting in his look; something to my eyes not rightly human; the face, lean, and dark, and aged, the mouth painful, the teeth disclosed in a perpetual rictus; the eyeball swimming clear of the lids upon a field of bloodshot white. I could not behold him myself without a jarring irritation, such as (I believe) is too frequently the uppermost feeling on the sickness of those dear to us. Others, I could not but remark, were scarce able to support his neighborhood—Sir William eviting to be near him, Mountain dodging his eye, and, when he met it, blanching and halting in his story. At this appeal, however, my lord appeared to recover his command upon himself.

"To Albany?" said he, with a good voice.

"Not short of it, at least," replied Sir William. "There is no safety nearer at hand."

"I would be very sweir[1] to return," says my lord. "I am not afraid—of Indians," he added, with a jerk.

"I wish that I could say so much," returned Sir William, smiling; "although if any man durst say it, it should be myself. But you are to keep in view my responsibility, and that as the voyage has now become highly dangerous, and your business—if you ever had any," says he, "brought quite to a conclusion by the distressing family intelligence you have received, I should be hardly justified if I even suffered you to proceed, and run the risk of some obloquy if anything regrettable should follow."

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[1] Unwilling.

My lord turned to Mountain. "What did he pretend he died of?" he asked.

"I don't think I understand your honor," said the trader, pausing like a man very much affected, in the dressing of some cruel frost-bites.

For a moment my lord seemed at a full stop; and then, with some irritation, "I ask you what he died of. Surely that's a plain question," said he.

"Oh, I don't know," said Mountain. "Hastie even never knew. He seemed to sicken natural, and just passed away."

"There it is, you see!" concluded my lord, turning to Sir William.

"Your lordship is too deep for me," replied Sir William.

"Why," says my lord, "this is a matter of succession; my son's title may be called in doubt; and the man being supposed to be dead of nobody can tell what, a great deal of suspicion would be naturally roused."

"But, God damn me, the man's buried!" cried Sir William.

"I will never believe that," returned my lord, painfully trembling. "I'll never believe it!" he cried again, and jumped to his feet. "Did he *look* dead?" he asked of Mountain.

"Look dead?" repeated the trader. "He looked white. Why, what would he be at? I tell you, I put the sods upon him."

My lord caught Sir William by the coat with a hooked hand. "This man has the name of my brother," says he, "but it's well understood that he was never canny."

"Canny?" says Sir William. "What is that?"

"He's not of this world," whispered my lord, "neither him nor the black deil that serves him. I have struck my sword throughout his vitals," he cried, "I have felt the hilt dirl[2] on his breast-bone, and the hot blood spurt in my very face, time and again, time and again!" he repeated, with a gesture indescribable. "But he was never dead for that," said he, and I sighed aloud. "Why should I think he was dead now? No, not till I see him rotting," says he.

Sir William looked across at me, with a long face. Mountain forgot his wounds, staring and gaping.

"My lord," said I, "I wish you would collect your spirits." But my throat was so dry, and my own wits so scattered, I could add no more.

"No," says my lord, "it's not to be supposed that he would understand me. Mackellar does, for he kens all, and has seen him buried before now. This is a very good servant to me, Sir William, this man Mackellar; he buried him with his own hands—he and my father—by the light of two siller candlesticks. The other man is a familiar spirit; he brought him from Coromandel. I would have told ye this long syne, Sir William, only it was in the family." These last remarks he made with a kind of melancholy composure, and his time of aberration seemed to pass away. "You can ask yourself what it all means," he proceeded. "My brother falls sick, and dies, and is buried, as so they say; and all seems very plain. But why did the familiar go back? I think ye must see for yourself it's a point that wants some clearing."

"I will be at your service, my lord, in half a minute," said Sir William, rising. "Mr. Mackellar, two words with you," and he led me without the camp, the frost crunching in our steps, the trees standing at our elbow hoar with frost, even as on that night in the long shrubbery. "Of course, this is midsummer madness?" said Sir William, so soon as we were gotten out of hearing.

"Why, certainly," said I. "The man is mad. I think that manifest."

"Shall I seize and bind him?" asked Sir William. "I will upon your authority. If these are all ravings, that should certainly be done."

I looked down upon the ground, back at the camp with

[2] Ring.

its bright fires and the folk watching us, and about me on the woods and mountains; there was just the one way that I could not look, and that was in Sir William's face.

"Sir William," said I, at last, "I think my lord not sane, and have long thought him so. But there are degrees in madness; and whether he should be brought under restraint —Sir William, I am no fit judge," I concluded.

"I will be the judge," said he. "I ask for facts. Was there, in all that jargon, any word of truth or sanity? Do you hesitate?" he asked. "Am I to understand you have buried this gentleman before?"

"Not buried," said I; and then, taking up courage at last, "Sir William," said I, "unless I were to tell you a long story, which much concerns a noble family (and myself not in the least), it would be impossible to make this matter clear to you. Say the word, and I will do it, right or wrong. And, at any rate, I will say so much, that my lord is not so crazy as he seems. This is a strange matter, into the tail of which you are unhappily drifted."

"I desire none of your secrets," replied Sir William; "but I will be plain, at the risk of incivility, and confess that I take little pleasure in my present company."

"I would be the last to blame you," said I, "for that."

"I have not asked either for your censure or your praise, sir," returned Sir William. "I desire simply to be quit of you; and to that effect, I put a boat and complement of men at your disposal."

"This is fairly offered," said I, after reflection. "But you must suffer me to say a word upon the other side. We have a natural curiosity to learn the truth of this affair; I have some of it myself; my lord (it is very plain) has but too much. The matter of the Indian's return is enigmatical."

"I think so myself," Sir William interrupted, "and I propose (since I go in that direction) to probe it to the bottom. Whether or not the man has gone like a dog to die upon his master's grave, his life, at least, is in great danger, and I propose, if I can, to save it. There is nothing against his character?"

"Nothing, Sir William," I replied.

"And the other?" he said. "I have heard my lord, of course; but, from the circumstances of his servant's loyalty, I must suppose he had some noble qualities."

"You must not ask me that!" I cried. "Hell may have noble flames. I have known him a score of years, and always hated, and always admired, and always slavishly feared him."

"I appear to intrude again upon your secrets," said Sir William, "believe me, inadvertently. Enough that I will see the grave, and (if possible) rescue the Indian. Upon these terms, can you persuade your master to return to Albany?"

"Sir William," said I, "I will tell you how it is. You do not see my lord to advantage; it will seem even strange to you that I should love him; but I do, and I am not alone. If he goes back to Albany it must be by force, and it will be the death-warrant of his reason, and perhaps his life. That is my sincere belief; but I am in your hands, and ready to obey, if you will assume so much responsibility as to command."

"I will have no shred of responsibility; it is my single endeavor to avoid the same," cried Sir William. "You insist upon following this journey up; and be it so! I wash my hands of the whole matter."

With which word he turned upon his heel and gave the order to break camp; and my lord, who had been hovering near by, came instantly to my side.

"Which is it to be?" said he.

"You are to have your way," I answered. "You shall see the grave."

The situation of the Master's grave was, between guides, easily described; it lay, indeed, beside a chief landmark of the wilderness, a certain range of peaks, conspicuous by their design and altitude, and the source of many brawling tributaries to that inland sea, Lake Champlain. It was therefore possible to strike for it direct, instead of following back the blood-stained trail of the fugitives, and to cover, in some sixteen hours of march, a distance which their perturbed wanderings had extended over more than sixty. Our boats we left under a guard upon the river;

it was, indeed, probable we should return to find them frozen fast; and the small equipment with which we set forth upon the expedition included not only an infinity of furs to protect us from the cold, but an arsenal of snow-shoes to render travel possible, when the inevitable snow should fall. Considerable alarm was manifested at our departure; the march was conducted with soldierly precaution, the camp at night sedulously chosen and patrolled; and it was a consideration of this sort that arrested us, the second day, within not many hundred yards of our destination—the night being already imminent, the spot in which we stood well qualified to be a strong camp for a party of our numbers; and Sir William, therefore, on a sudden thought, arresting our advance.

Before us was the high range of mountains toward which we had been all day deviously drawing near. From the first light of the dawn, their silver peaks had been the goal of our advance across a tumbled lowland forest, thrid with rough streams, and strewn with monstrous boulders; the peaks (as I say) silver, for already at the higher altitudes the snow fell nightly; but the woods and the low ground only breathed upon the frost. All day heaven had been charged with ugly vapors, in the which the sun swam and glimmered like a shilling piece; all day the wind blew on our left cheek, barbarous cold, but very pure to breathe. With the end of the afternoon, however, the wind fell; the clouds, being no longer reenforced, were scattered or drunk up; the sun set behind us with some wintry splendor, and the white brow of the mountains shared its dying glow.

It was dark ere we had supper; we ate in silence, and the meal was scarce despatched before my lord slunk from the fireside to the margin of the camp, whither I made haste to follow him. The camp was on high ground overlooking a frozen lake, perhaps a mile in its longest measurement; all about us the forest lay in heights and hollows; above rose the white mountains; and higher yet the moon rode in a fair sky. There was no breath of air; nowhere a twig creaked; and the sounds of our own camp were hushed and swallowed up in the surrounding stillness. Now that the sun and the wind were both gone down, it appeared almost warm, like a night of July; a singular illusion of the sense, when earth, air, and water were strained to bursting with the extremity of frost.

My lord (or what I still continued to call by his loved name) stood with his elbow in one hand, and his chin sunk in the other, gazing before him on the surface of the wood. My eyes followed his, and rested almost pleasantly upon the frosted contexture of the pines, rising in moonlit hillocks, or sinking in the shadow of small glens. Hard by, I told myself, was the grave of our enemy, now gone where the wicked cease from troubling, the earth heaped forever on his once so active limbs. I could not but think of him as somehow fortunate, to be thus done with man's anxiety and weariness, the daily expense of spirit, and that daily river of circumstance to be swum through, at any hazard, under the penalty of shame or death. I could not but think how good was the end of that long travel; and with that, my mind swung at a tangent to my lord. For was not my lord dead also? a maimed soldier, looking vainly for discharge, lingering derided in the line of battle? A kind man, I remembered him; wise, with a decent pride, a son perhaps too dutiful, a husband only too loving, one that could suffer and be silent, one whose hand I loved to press. Of a sudden, pity caught in my windpipe with a sob; I could have wept aloud to remember and behold him; and standing thus by his elbow, under the broad moon, I prayed fervently either that he should be released or I strengthened to persist in my affection.

"Oh God," said I, "this was the best man to me and to himself, and now I shrink from him. He did no wrong, or not till he was broke with sorrows; these are but his honorable wounds that we begin to shrink from. Oh, cover them up, oh, take him away, before we hate him!"

I was still so engaged in my own bosom, when a sound broke suddenly upon the night. It was neither very loud nor very near; yet, bursting as it did from so profound and so prolonged a silence, it startled the camp like an alarm of trumpets. Ere I had taken breath Sir William was beside me, the main part of the voyagers clustered at his back, intently giving ear. Methought, as I glanced at them across my shoulder, there was a whiteness, other than moonlight, on their cheeks; and the rays of the moon reflected with a sparkle on the eyes of some, and the shadows lying black under the brows of others (according as they raised or bowed the head to listen) gave to the group a strange air of animation and anxiety. My lord was to the front, crouching a little forth, his hand raised as for silence; a man turned to stone. And still the sounds continued, breathlessly renewed, with a precipitate rhythm.

Suddenly Mountain spoke in a loud, broken whisper, as of a man relieved. "I have it now," he said; and, as we all turned to hear him, "the Indian must have known the cache," he added. "That is he—he is digging out the treasure."

"Why, to be sure!" exclaimed Sir William. "We were geese not to have supposed so much."

"The only thing is," Mountain resumed, "the sound is very close to our camp. And again, I do not see how he is there before us, unless the man had wings!"

"Greed and fear are wings," remarked Sir William. "But this rogue has given us an alert, and I have a notion to return the compliment. What say you, gentlemen, shall we have a moonlight hunt?"

It was so agreed; dispositions were made to surround Secundra at his task: some of Sir William's Indians hastened in advance; and a strong guard being left at our headquarters, we set forth along the uneven bottom of the forest; frost crackling, ice sometimes loudly splitting underfoot; and overhead the blackness of pine woods, and the broken brightness of the moon. Our way led down into a hollow of the land; and as we descended the sounds diminished and had almost died away. Upon the other slope it was more open, only dotted with a few pines, and several vast and scattered rocks that made inky shadows in the moonlight. Here the sounds began to reach us more distinctly; we could now perceive the ring of iron, and more exactly estimate the furious degree of haste with which the digger plied his instrument. As we neared the top of the ascent a bird or two winged aloft and hovered darkly in the moonlight; and the next moment we were gazing through a fringe of trees upon a singular picture.

A narrow plateau, overlooked by the white mountains, and encompassed nearer hand by woods, lay bare to the strong radiance of the moon. Rough goods, such as make the wealth of foresters, were sprinkled here and there upon the ground in meaningless disarray. About the midst a tent stood, silvered with frost; the door open, gaping on the black interior. At the one end of this small stage lay what seemed the tattered remnants of a man. Without doubt we had arrived upon the scene of Harris's encampment; there were the goods scattered in the panic of flight; it was in yon tent the Master breathed his last; and the frozen carrion that lay before us was the body of the drunken shoemaker. It was always moving to come upon the theater of any tragic incident; to come upon it after so many days, and to find it (in the seclusion of a desert) still unchanged, must have impressed the mind of the most careless. And yet it was not that which struck us into pillars of stone; but the sight (which yet we had been half expecting) of Secundra, ankle deep in the grave of his late master. He had cast the main part of his raiment by, yet his frail arms and shoulders glistened in the moonlight with a copious sweat; his face was contracted with anxiety and expectation; his blows resounded on the grave, as thick sobs; and behind him, strangely deformed and ink-black upon the frosty ground, the creature's shadow repeated and parodied his swift gesticulations. Some night-birds arose from the boughs upon our coming, and then settled back; but Secundra, absorbed in his toil, heard or heeded not at all.

I heard Mountain whisper to Sir William: "Good God, it's the grave! He's digging him up!" It was what we had all guessed, and yet to hear it put in language thrilled me. Sir William violently started.

"You damned sacrilegious hound!" he cried. "What's this?"

Secundra leaped in the air, a little breathless cry escaped him, the tool flew from his grasp, and he stood one instant staring at the speaker. The next, swift as an arrow, he sped for the woods upon the further side; and the next again, throwing up his hands with a violent gesture of resolution, he had begun already to retrace his steps.

"Well, then, you come, you help—" he was saying. But by now my lord had stepped beside Sir William; the moon shone fair upon his face, and the words were still upon Secundra's lips when he beheld and recognized his master's enemy. "Him!" he screamed, clasping his hands and shrinking on himself.

"Come, come," said Sir William, "there is none here to do you harm, if you be innocent; and if you be guilty, your escape is quite cut off. Speak, what do you here among the graves of the dead and the remains of the unburied?"

"You no murderer?" inquired Secundra. "You true man? You see me safe?"

"I will see you safe, if you be innocent," returned Sir William. "I have said the thing, and I see not wherefore you should doubt it."

"There all murderers," cried Secundra, "that is why! He kill—murderer," pointing to Mountain; "there two hire-murderers"—pointing to my lord and myself—"all gallows-murderers! Ah, I see you all swing in a rope. Now I go save the sahib; he see you swing in a rope. The sahib," he continued, pointing to the grave, "he not dead. He bury, he not dead."

My lord uttered a little noise, moved nearer to the grave, and stood and stared in it.

"Buried and not dead?" exclaimed Sir William. "What kind of rant is this?"

"See, sahib!" said Secundra. "The sahib and I alone with murderers; try all way to escape, no way good. Then try this way: good way in warm climate, good way in India; here in this damn cold place, who can tell? I tell you pretty good hurry: you help, you light a fire, help rub."

"What is the creature talking of?" cried Sir William. "My head goes round."

"I tell you I bury him alive," said Secundra. "I teach him swallow his tongue. Now dig him up pretty good hurry, and he not much worse. You light a fire."

Sir William turned to the nearest of his men. "Light a fire," said he. "My lot seems to be cast with the insane."

"You good man," returned Secundra. "Now I go dig the sahib up."

He returned as he spoke to the grave, and resumed his former toil. My lord stood rooted, and I at my lord's side: fearing I knew not what.

The frost was not yet very deep, and presently the Indian threw aside his tool and began to scoop the dirt by handfuls.

Then he disengaged a corner of a buffalo robe: and then I saw hair catch among his fingers; yet a moment more, and the moon shone on something white. A while Secundra crouched upon his knees, scraping with delicate fingers, breathing with puffed lips; and when he moved aside I beheld the face of the Master wholly disengaged. It was deadly white, the eyes closed, the ears and nostrils plugged, the cheeks fallen, the nose sharp as if in death; but for all he had lain so many days under the sod, corruption had not approached him and (what strangely affected all of us) his lips and chin were mantled with a swarthy beard.

"My God!" cried Mountain, "he was as smooth as a baby when we laid him there!"

"They say hair grows upon the dead," observed Sir William, but his voice was thick and weak.

Secundra paid no heed to our remarks, digging swift as a terrier, in the loose earth; every moment the form of the Master, swathed in his buffalo robe, grew more distinct in the bottom of that shallow trough; the moon shining strong, and the shadows of the standers-by, as they drew forward and back, falling and flitting over his emergent countenance. The sight held us with a horror not before experienced. I dared not look my lord in the face, but for as long as it lasted I never observed him to draw breath; and a little in the background one of the men (I know not whom) burst into a kind of sobbing.

"Now," said Secundra, "you help me lift him out."

Of the flight of time I have no idea; it may have been three hours, and it may have been five, that the Indian labored to reanimate his master's body. One thing only I know, that it was still night, and the moon was not yet set, although it had sunk low, and now barred the plateau with long shadows, when Secundra uttered a small cry of satisfaction; and, leaning swiftly forth, I thought I could myself perceive a change upon that icy countenance of the unburied. The next moment I beheld his eyelids flutter; the next they rose entirely, and the week-old corpse looked me for a moment in the face.

So much display of life I can myself swear to. I have heard from others that he visibly strove to speak, that his teeth showed in his beard, and that his brow was contorted as with an agony of pain and effort. And this may have been; I do not know, I was otherwise engaged. For, at that first disclosure of the dead man's eyes, my Lord Durrisdeer fell to the ground, and when I raised him up he was a corpse.

Day came, and still Secundra could not be persuaded to desist from his unavailing efforts. Sir William, leaving a small party under my command, proceeded on his embassy with the first light; and still the Indian rubbed the limbs and breathed in the mouth of the dead body. You would think such labors might have vitalized a stone; but, except for that one moment (which was my lord's death), the black spirit of the Master held aloof from its discarded clay; and by about the hour of noon even the faithful servant was at length convinced. He took it with unshaken quietude.

"Too cold," said he, "good way in India, no good here." And, asking for some food, which he ravenously devoured as soon as it was set before him, he drew near to the fire and took his place at my elbow. In the same spot, as soon as he had eaten, he stretched himself out, and fell into a childlike slumber, from which I must arouse him, some hours afterward, to take his part as one of the mourners at the double funeral. It was the same throughout; he seemed to have outlived at once and with the same effort, his grief for his master and his terror of myself and Mountain.

One of the men left with me was skilled in stonecutting; and before Sir William returned to pick us up I had chiseled on a boulder this inscription, with a copy of which I may fitly bring my narrative to a close:

J. D.,
HEIR TO A SCOTTISH TITLE,
A MASTER OF THE ARTS AND GRACES,
ADMIRED IN EUROPE, ASIA, AMERICA,
IN WAR AND PEACE,
IN THE TENTS OF SAVAGE HUNTERS AND THE
CITADELS OF KINGS, AFTER SO MUCH
ACQUIRED, ACCOMPLISHED, AND
ENDURED, LIES HERE FOR-
GOTTEN.

H. D.,
HIS BROTHER,
AFTER A LIFE OF UNMERITED DISTRESS,
BRAVELY SUPPORTED,
DIED ALMOST IN THE SAME HOUR,
AND SLEEPS IN THE SAME GRAVE
WITH HIS FRATERNAL ENEMY.

THE PIETY OF HIS WIFE AND ONE OLD
SERVANT RAISED THIS STONE
TO BOTH.

PRINCE OTTO

DEDICATION

To

Nelly Van De Grift

(Mrs. Adulfo Sanchez of Monterey)

At last, after so many years, I have the pleasure of re-introducing you to Prince Otto, *whom you will remember a very little fellow, no bigger in fact than a few sheets of memoranda written for me by your kind hand. The sight of his name will carry you back to an old wooden house embowered in creepers; a house that was far gone in the respectable stages of antiquity and seemed indissoluble from the green garden in which it stood, and that yet was a sea-traveler in its younger days, and had come round the Horn piecemeal in the belly of a ship, and might have heard the seamen stamping and shouting and the note of the boatswain's whistle. It will recall to you the nondescript inhabitants now so widely scattered:—the two horses, the dog, and the four cats, some of them still looking in your face as you read these lines;—the poor lady, so unfortunately married to an author;—the China boy, by this time, perhaps, baiting his line by the banks of a river in the Flowery Land;—and in particular the Scot who was then sick apparently unto death, and whom you did so much to cheer and keep in good behavior.*

You may remember that he was full of ambitions and designs: so soon as he had his health again completely, you may remember the fortune he was to earn, the journeys he was to go upon, the delights he was to enjoy and confer, and (among other matters) the masterpiece he was to make of Prince Otto!

Well, we will not give in that we are finally beaten. We read together in those days the story of Braddock, and how, as he was carried dying from the scene of his defeat, *he promised himself to do better another time: a story that will always touch a brave heart, and a dying speech worthy of a more fortunate commander. I try to be of Braddock's mind. I still mean to get my health again; I still purpose, by hook or crook, this book or the next, to launch a masterpiece; and I still intend—some how, some time or other—to see your face and to hold your hand.*

Meanwhile, this little paper traveler goes forth instead, crosses the great seas and the long plains and the dark mountains, and comes at last to your door in Monterey, charged with tender greetings. Pray you, take him in. He comes from a house where (even as in your own) there are gathered together some of the waifs of our company at Oakland; a house—for all its outlandish Gaelic name and distant station—where you are well-beloved.

R. L. S.

SKERRYVORE,
BOURNEMOUTH.

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PRINCE OTTO

PART I

PRINCE ERRANT

CHAPTER I

IN WHICH THE PRINCE DEPARTS ON AN ADVENTURE

YOU shall seek in vain upon the map of Europe for the bygone state of Grünewald. An independent principality, an infinitesimal member of the German Empire, she played, for several centuries, her part in the discord of Europe; and, at last, in the ripeness of time and at the spiriting of several bald diplomatists, vanished like a morning ghost. Less fortunate than Poland, she left not a regret behind her; and the very memory of her boundaries has faded.

It was a patch of hilly country covered with thick wood. Many streams took their beginning in the glens of Grünewald, turning mills for the inhabitants. There was one town, Mittwalden, and many brown, wooden hamlets, climbing roof above roof, along the steep bottom of dells, and communicating by covered bridges over the larger of the torrents. The hum of watermills, the splash of running water, the clean odor of pine sawdust, the sound and smell of the pleasant wind among the innumerable army of the mountain pines, the dropping fire of huntsmen, the dull stroke of the wood ax, intolerable roads, fresh trout for supper in the clean bare chamber of an inn, and the song of birds and the music of the village-bells—these were the recollections of the Grünewald tourist.

North and east the foothills of Grünewald sank with varying profile into a vast plain. On these sides many small states bordered with the principality, Gerolstein, an extinct grand duchy, among the number. On the south it marched with the comparatively powerful kingdom of Seaboard Bohemia, celebrated for its flowers and mountain bears, and inhabited by a people of singular simplicity and tenderness of heart. Several intermarriages had, in the course of centuries, united the crowned families of Grünewald and maritime Bohemia; and the last Prince of Grünewald, whose history I purpose to relate, drew a descent through Perdita, the only daughter of King Florizel the First of Bohemia. That these intermarriages had in some degree mitigated the rough, manly stock of the first Grünewalds, was an opinion widely held within the borders of the principality. The charcoal burner, the mountain sawyer, the wielder of the broadax among the congregated pines of Grünewald, proud of their hard hands, proud of their shrewd ignorance and almost savage lore, looked with an unfeigned contempt on the soft character and manners of the sovereign race.

The precise year of grace in which this tale begins shall be left to the conjecture of the reader. But for the season of the year (which, in such a story, is the more important of the two) it was already so far forward in the spring, that when mountain people heard horns echoing all day about the northwest corner of the principality, they told themselves that Prince Otto and his hunt were up and out for the last time till the return of autumn.

At this point the borders of Grünewald descend somewhat steeply, here and there breaking into crags; and this shaggy and trackless country stands in a bold contrast to the cultivated plain below. It was traversed at that period by two roads alone; one, the imperial highway, bound to Brandenau in Gerolstein, descended the slope obliquely and by the easiest gradients. The other ran like a fillet across the very forehead of the hills, dipping into savage gorges, and wetted by the spray of tiny waterfalls. Once it passed beside a certain tower or castle, built sheer upon the margin of a formidable cliff, and commanding a vast prospect of the skirts of Grünewald and the busy plains of Gerolstein. The Felsenburg (so this tower was called) served now as a prison, now as a hunting-seat; and for all it stood so lonesome to the naked eye, with the aid of a good glass the burghers of Brandenau could count its windows from the lime-tree terrace where they walked at night.

In the wedge of forest hillside enclosed between the roads, the horns continued all day long to scatter tumult; and at length, as the sun began to draw near to the horizon of the plain, a rousing triumph announced the slaughter of the quarry. The first and second huntsman had drawn somewhat aside, and from the summit of a knoll gazed down before them on the drooping shoulders of the hill and across the expanse of plain. They covered their eyes, for the sun was in their faces. The glory of its going down was somewhat pale. Through the confused tracery of many thousands of naked poplars, the smoke of so many houses, and the evening steam ascending from the fields, the sails of a windmill on a gentle eminence moved very conspicuously, like a donkey's ears. And hard by, like an open gash, the imperial highroad ran straight sunward, an artery of travel.

There is one of nature's spiritual ditties, that has not yet been set to words or human music: "The Invitation to the Road;" an air continually sounding in the ears of gipsies, and to whose inspiration our nomadic fathers journeyed all their days. The hour, the season, and the scene, all were in delicate accordance. The air was full of birds of passage, steering westward and northward over Grünewald, an army of specks to the up-looking eye. And below, the great practicable road was bound for the same quarter.

But to the two horsemen on the knoll this spiritual ditty was unheard. They were, indeed, in some concern of mind, scanning every fold of the subjacent forest, and betraying both anger and dismay in their impatient gestures.

"I do not see him, Kuno," said the first huntsman, "nowhere—not a trace, not a hair of the mare's tail! No, sir, he's off; broke cover and got away. Why, for twopence I would hunt him with the dogs!"

"Mayhap, he's gone home," said Kuno, but without conviction.

"Home!" sneered the other. "I give him twelve days to get home. No, it's begun again; it's as it was three years ago, before he married; a disgrace! Hereditary prince, hereditary fool! There goes the government over the borders on a gray mare. What's that? No, nothing—no, I tell you, on my word, I set more store by a good gelding or an English dog. That for your Otto!"

"He's not my Otto," growled Kuno.

"Then I don't know whose he is," was the retort.

"You would put your hand in the fire for him tomorrow," said Kuno, facing round.

"Me!" cried the huntsman. "I would see him hanged! I'm a Grünewald patriot—enrolled, and have my medal, too; and I would help a prince! I'm for liberty and Gondremark."

"Well, it's all one," said Kuno. "If anybody said what you said, you would have his blood, and you know it."

"You have him on the brain," retorted his companion. "There he goes!" he cried, the next moment.

And sure enough, about a mile down the mountain, a rider on a white horse was seen to flit rapidly across a heathy open and vanish among the trees on the farther side.

"In ten minutes he'll be over the border into Gerolstein," said Kuno. "It's past cure."

"Well, if he founders that mare, I'll never forgive him," added the other, gathering his reins.

And as they turned down from the knoll to rejoin their comrades, the sun dipped and disappeared, and the woods fell instantly into the gravity and grayness of the early night.

CHAPTER II

IN WHICH THE PRINCE PLAYS HAROUN-AL-RASCHID

THE night fell upon the Prince while he was threading green tracks in the lower valleys of the wood; and though the stars came out overhead and displayed the interminable order of the pine-tree pyramids, regular and dark like cypresses, their light was of small service to a traveler in such lonely paths, and from thenceforth he rode at random. The austere face of nature, the uncertain issue of his course, the open sky and the free air delighted him like wine; and the hoarse chafing of a river on his left sounded in his ears agreeably.

It was past eight at night before his toil was rewarded and he issued at last out of the forest on the firm white highroad. It lay downhill before him, with a sweeping eastward trend, faintly bright between the thickets; and Otto paused and gazed upon it. So it ran, league after league, still joining others, to the farthest ends of Europe, there skirting the sea surge, here gleaming in the lights of cities; and the innumerable army of tramps and travelers moved upon it in all lands as by a common impulse, and were now in all places drawing near to the inn door and the night's rest. The pictures swarmed and vanished in his brain; a surge of temptation, a beat of all his blood, went over him, to set spur to the mare and to go on into the unknown for ever. And then it passed away; hunger and fatigue, and that habit of middling actions which we call common sense, resumed their empire; and in that changed mood, his eye lighted upon two bright windows on his left hand, between the road and river.

He turned off by a by-road, and in a few minutes he was knocking with his whip on the door of a large farmhouse, and a chorus of dogs from the farmyard were making angry answer. A very tall, old, whiteheaded man came, shading a candle, at the summons. He had been of great strength in his time, and of a handsome countenance; but now he was fallen away, his teeth were quite gone, and his voice when he spoke was broken and falsetto.

"You will pardon me," said Otto. "I am a traveler and have entirely lost my way."

"Sir," said the old man, in a very stately, shaky manner, "you are at the River Farm, and I am Killian Gottesheim, at your disposal. We are here, sir, at about an equal distance from Mittwalden in Grünewald and Brandenau in Gerolstein: six leagues to either, and the road excellent; but there is not a wine bush, not a carter's alehouse, anywhere between. You will have to accept my hospitality for the night; rough hospitality, to which I make you freely welcome; for, sir," he added with a bow, "it is God who sends the guest."

"Amen. And I most heartily thank you," replied Otto, bowing in his turn.

"Fritz," said the old man, turning toward the interior, "lead round this gentleman's horse; and you, sir, condescend to enter."

Otto entered a chamber occupying the greater part of the ground floor of the building. It had probably once been divided; for the farther end was raised by a long step above the nearer, and the blazing fire and the white supper-table seemed to stand upon a daïs. All around were dark, brass-mounted cabinets and cupboards; dark shelves carrying ancient country crockery; guns and antlers and broadside ballads on the wall; a tall old clock with roses on the dial; and down in one corner the comfortable promise of a wine barrel. It was homely, elegant, and quaint.

A powerful youth hurried out to attend on the gray mare; and when Mr. Killian Gottesheim had presented him to his daughter Ottilia, Otto followed to the stable as became, not perhaps the Prince, but the good horseman. When he returned, a smoking omelet and some slices of home-cured ham were waiting him; these were followed by a ragout and a cheese; and it was not until his guest had entirely satisfied his hunger, and the whole party drew about the fire over the wine jug, that Killian Gottesheim's elaborate courtesy permitted him to address a question to the Prince.

"You have perhaps ridden far, sir?" he inquired.

"I have, as you say, ridden far," replied Otto; "and, as you have seen, I was prepared to do justice to your daughter's cookery."

"Possibly, sir, from the direction of Brandenau?" continued Killian.

"Precisely: and I should have slept to-night, had I not wandered, in Mittwalden," answered the Prince, weaving in a patch of truth, according to the habit of all liars.

"Business leads you to Mittwalden?" was the next question.

"Mere curiosity," said Otto. "I have never yet visited the principality of Grünewald."

"A pleasant state, sir," piped the old man, nodding, "a very pleasant state, and a fine race, both pines and people. We reckon ourselves part Grünewalders here, lying so near the borders; and the river there is all good Grünewald water, every drop of it. Yes, sir, a fine state. A man of Grünewald now will swing me an ax over his head that many a man of Gerolstein could hardly lift; and the pines, why, deary me, there must be more pines in that little state, sir, than people in this whole big world. 'Tis twenty years now since I crossed the marshes, for we grow home-keepers in old age; but I mind it as if it was yesterday. Up and down, the road keeps right on from here to Mittwalden; and nothing all the way but the good green pine trees, big and little, and water-power! water-power at every step, sir. We once sold a bit of forest, up there beside the highroad; and the sight of minted money that we got for it, has set me ciphering ever since what all the pines in Grünewald would amount to."

"I suppose you see nothing of the Prince?" inquired Otto.

"No," said the young man, speaking for the first time, "nor want to."

"Why so? is he so much disliked?" asked Otto.

"Not what you might call disliked," replied the old gentleman, "but despised, sir."

"Indeed," said the Prince, somewhat faintly.

"Yes, sir, despised," nodded Killian, filling a long pipe, "and, to my way of thinking, justly despised. Here is a man with great opportunities, and what does he do with them? He hunts, and he dresses very prettily—which is a thing to be ashamed of in a man—and he acts plays; and if he does aught else, the news of it has not come here."

"Yet these are all innocent," said Otto. "What would you have him do—make war?"

"No, sir," replied the old man. "But here it is; I have been fifty years upon this River Farm, and wrought in it, day in, day out; I have plowed and sowed and reaped, and risen early, and waked late; and this is the upshot: that all these years it has supported me and my family; and been the best friend that ever I had, set aside my wife; and now, when my time comes, I leave it a better farm than when I found it. So it is, if a man works hearty in the order of nature, he gets bread and he receives comfort, and whatever he touches breeds. And it humbly appears to me, if that Prince was to labor on his throne, as I have labored and wrought in my farm, he would find both an increase and a blessing."

"I believe with you, sir," Otto said; "and yet the parallel is inexact. For the farmer's life is natural and simple; but the prince's is both artificial and complicated. It is easy to do right in the one, and exceedingly difficult not to do wrong in the other. If your crop is blighted, you can take off your bonnet and say, 'God's will be done'; but if the Prince meets with a reverse, he may have to blame himself for the attempt. And perhaps, if all the kings in Europe were to confine themselves to innocent amusement, the subjects would be the better off."

"Ay," said the young man Fritz, "you are in the right of it there. That was a true word spoken. And I see you are like me, a good patriot and an enemy to princes."

Otto was somewhat abashed at this deduction, and he made haste to change his ground. "But," said he, "you surprise me by what you say of this Prince Otto. I have heard him, I must own, more favorably painted. I was told he was, in his heart, a good fellow, and the enemy of no one but himself."

"And so he is, sir," said the girl, "a very handsome, pleasant prince; and we know some who would shed their blood for him."

"O! Kuno!" said Fritz. "An ignoramus!"

"Ay, Kuno, to be sure," quavered the old farmer. "Well, since this gentleman is a stranger to these parts, and curious about the Prince, I do believe that story might divert him. This Kuno, you must know, sir, is one of the hunt servants, and a most ignorant, intemperate man: a right Grünewalder, as we say in Gerolstein. We know him well, in this house; for he has come as far as here after his stray dogs; and I make all welcome, sir, without account of state or nation. And, indeed, between Gerolstein and Grünewald the peace has held so long that the roads stand open like my door; and a man will make no more of the frontier than the very birds themselves."

"Ay," said Otto, "it has been a long peace—a peace of centuries."

"Centuries, as you say," returned Killian: "the more the pity that it should not be for ever. Well, sir, this Kuno was one day in fault, and Otto, who has a quick temper, up with his whip and thrashed him, they do say, soundly. Kuno took it as best he could, but at last he broke out, and dared the Prince to throw his whip away and wrestle like a man; for we are all great at wrestling in these parts, and it's so that we generally settle our disputes. Well, sir, the Prince did so; and being a weakly creature, found the tables turned; for the man whom he had just been thrashing like a negro slave, lifted him with a back grip and threw him heels overhead."

"He broke his bridle-arm," cried Fritz—"and some say his nose. Serve him right, say I! Man to man, which is the better at that?"

"And then?" asked Otto.

"O, then, Kuno carried him home; and they were the best of friends from that day forth. I don't say it's a discreditable story, you observe," continued Mr. Gottesheim; "but it's droll, and that's the fact. A man should think before he strikes; for, as my nephew says, man to man was the old valuation."

"Now, if you were to ask me," said Otto, "I should perhaps surprise you. I think it was the Prince that conquered."

"And, sir, you would be right," replied Killian, seriously. "In the eyes of God, I do not question but you would be right; but men, sir, look at these things differently, and they laugh."

"They made a song of it," observed Fritz. "How does it go? Ta-tum-ta-ra. . . ."

"Well," interrupted Otto, who had no great anxiety to hear the song, "the Prince is young; he may yet mend."

"Not so young, by your leave," cried Fritz. "A man of forty."

"Thirty-six," corrected Mr. Gottesheim.

"Oh," cried Ottilia, in obvious disillusion, "a man of middle age! And they said he was so handsome when he was young!"

"And bald, too," added Fritz.

Otto passed his hand among his locks. At that moment he was far from happy, and even the tedious evenings at Mittwalden Palace began to smile upon him by comparison.

"Oh, six-and-thirty!" he protested. "A man is not yet old at six-and-thirty. I am that age myself."

"I should have taken you for more, sir," piped the old farmer. "But if that be so, you are of an age with Master Ottekin, as people call him; and, I would wager a crown, have done more service in your time. Though it seems young by comparison with men of a great age like me, yet it's some way through life for all that; and the mere fools and fiddlers are beginning to grow weary and to look old. Yes, sir, by six-and-thirty, if a man be a follower of God's laws, he should have made himself a home and a good name to live by; he should have got a wife and a blessing on his marriage; and his works, as the Word says, should begin to follow him."

"Ah, well, the Prince is married," cried Fritz, with a coarse burst of laughter.

"That seems to entertain you, sir," said Otto.

"Ay," said the young boor. "Did you not know that? I thought all Europe knew it!" And he added a pantomime of a nature to explain his accusation to the dullest.

"Ah, sir," said Mr. Gottesheim, "it is very plain that you are not from hereabouts! But the truth is, that the whole princely family and Court are rips and rascals, not one to mend another. They live, sir, in idleness and—what most commonly follows it—corruption. The Princess has a lover; a Baron, as he calls himself, from East Prussia; and the Prince is so little of a man, sir, that he holds the candle. Nor is that the worst of it, for this foreigner and his paramour are suffered to transact the State affairs, while the Prince takes the salary and leaves all things to go to wrack. There will follow upon this some manifest judgment which, though I am old, I may survive to see."

"Good man, you are in the wrong about Gondremark," said Fritz, showing a greatly increased animation; "but for all the rest, you speak the God's truth like a good patriot. As for the Prince, if he would take and strangle his wife, I would forgive him yet."

"Nay, Fritz," said the old man, "that would be to add iniquity to evil. For you perceive, sir," he continued, once more addressing himself to the unfortunate Prince, "this Otto has himself to thank for these disorders. He has his young wife and his principality, and he has sworn to cherish both."

"Sworn at the altar!" echoed Fritz. "But put your faith in princes!"

"Well, sir, he leaves them both to an adventurer from East Prussia," pursued the farmer; "leaves the girl to be seduced and to go on from bad to worse, till her name's become a taproom byword, and she not yet twenty; leaves the country to be overtaxed, and bullied with armaments, and jockeyed into war—"

"War!" cried Otto.

"So they say, sir; those that watch their ongoings, say to war," asseverated Killian. "Well, sir, that is very sad; it is a sad thing for this poor, wicked girl to go down to hell with people's curses; it's a sad thing for a tight little happy country to be misconducted; but whoever may complain, I humbly conceive, sir, that this Otto can not. What he has worked for, that he has got; and may God have pity on his soul, for a great and a silly sinner's!"

"He has broke his oath; then he is a perjurer. He takes the money and leaves the work; why, then plainly he's a thief. A cuckold he was before, and a fool by birth. Better me that!" cried Fritz, and snapped his fingers.

"And now, sir, you will see a little," continued the farmer, "why we think so poorly of this Prince Otto. There's such a thing as a man being pious and honest in the private way; and there is such a thing, sir, as a public virtue; but when a man has neither, the Lord lighten him! Even this Gondremark, that Fritz here thinks so much of—"

"Ay," interrupted Fritz, "Gondremark's the man for me. I would we had his like in Gerolstein."

"He is a bad man," said the old farmer, shaking his head; "and there was never good begun by the breach of God's commandments. But so far I will go with you: he is a man that works for what he has."

"I tell you he's the hope of Grünewald," cried Fritz. "He doesn't suit some of your high-and-dry, old, ancient ideas; but he's a downright modern man—a man of the new lights and the progress of the age. He does some things wrong; so they all do; but he has the people's interests next his heart; and you mark me—you, sir, who are a Liberal, and the enemy of all their governments, you please to mark my words—the day will come in Grünewald, when they take out that yellow-headed skulk of a Prince and that dough-faced Messalina of a Princess, march 'em back foremost over the borders, and proclaim the Baron Gondremark first President. I've heard them say it in a speech. I was at a meeting once at Brandenau, and the Mittwalden delegates spoke up for fifteen thousand. Fifteen thousand, all brigaded, and each man with a medal round his neck to rally by. That's all Gondremark."

"Ah, sir, you see what it leads to: wild talk to-day, and wilder doings to-morrow," said the old man. "For there is one thing certain: that this Gondremark has one foot in the Court backstairs, and the other in the Masons' lodges. He gives himself out, sir, for what nowadays they call a patriot: a man from East Prussia!"

"Give himself out!" cried Fritz. "He is! He is to lay by his title as soon as the Republic is declared; I heard it in a speech."

"Lay by Baron to take up President?" returned Killian. "King Log, King Stork. But you'll live longer than I, and you will see the fruits of it."

"Father," whispered Ottilia, pulling at the speaker's coat, "surely the gentleman is ill."

"I beg your pardon," cried the farmer, rewaking to hospitable thoughts; "can I offer you anything?"

"I thank you. I am very weary," answered Otto. "I have presumed upon my strength. If you would show me to a bed, I should be grateful."

"Ottilia, a candle!" said the old man. "Indeed, sir, you look pale. A little cordial water? No? Then follow me, I beseech you, and I will bring you to the stranger's bed. You are not the first by many who has slept well below my roof," continued the old gentleman, mounting the stairs before his guest; "for good food, honest wine, a grateful conscience, and a little pleasant chat before a man retires, are worth all the possets and apothecary's drugs. See, sir," and here he opened a door and ushered Otto into a little whitewashed sleeping-room, "here you are in port. It is small, but it is airy, and the sheets are clean and kept in lavender. The window, too, looks out above the river, and there's no music like a little river's. It plays the same tune (and that's the favorite) over and over again, and yet does not weary of it like men fiddlers. It takes the mind out of doors; and though we should be grateful for good houses, there is, after all, no house like God's out-of-doors. And lastly, sir, it quiets a man down like saying his prayers. So here, sir, I take my kind leave of you until to-morrow; and it is my prayerful wish that you may slumber like a prince."

And the old man, with the twentieth courteous inclination, left his guest alone.

CHAPTER III

IN WHICH THE PRINCE COMFORTS AGE AND BEAUTY AND DELIVERS A LECTURE ON DISCRETION IN LOVE

THE Prince was early abroad: in the time of the first chorus of birds, of the pure and quiet air, of the slanting sunlight and the mile-long shadows. To one who had passed a miserable night, the freshness of that hour was tonic and reviving; to steal a march upon his slumbering fellows, to be the Adam of the coming day, composed and fortified his spirit; and the Prince, breathing deep and pausing as he went, walked in wet fields beside his shadow, and was glad.

A trellized path led down into the valley of the brook, and he turned to follow it. The stream was a break-neck, boiling highland river. Hard by the farm, it leaped a little precipice in a thick gray-mare's tail of twisted filaments, and then lay and worked and bubbled in a lynn. Into the middle of this quaking pool a rock protruded, shelving to a cape; and thither Otto scrambled and sat down to ponder.

Soon the sun struck through the screen of branches and thin early leaves that made a hanging bower above the fall; and the golden lights and flitting shadows fell upon and marbled the surface of that seething pot; and rays plunged deep among the turning waters; and a spark, as bright as a diamond, lit upon the swaying eddy. It began to grow warm where Otto lingered, warm and heady; the lights swam, weaving their maze across the shaken pool; on the impending rock, reflections danced like butterflies; and the air was fanned by the waterfall as by a swinging curtain.

Otto, who was weary with tossing and beset with horrid phantoms of remorse and jealousy, instantly fell dead in love with that sun-checkered, echoing corner. Holding his feet, he stared out of a drowsy trance, wondering, admiring, musing, losing his way among uncertain thoughts. There is nothing that so apes the external bearing of free will, as that unconscious bustle, obscurely following liquid laws, with which a river contends among obstructions. It seems the very play of man and destiny, and as Otto pored on these recurrent changes, he grew, by equal steps, the sleepier and the more profound. Eddy and Prince were alike jostled in their purpose, alike anchored by intangible influences in one corner of the world. Eddy and Prince were alike useless, starkly useless, in the cosmology of men. Eddy and Prince—Prince and Eddy.

It is probable he had been some while asleep when a voice recalled him from oblivion. "Sir," it was saying; and looking round, he saw Mr. Killian's daughter, terrified by her boldness and making bashful signals from the shore. She was a plain, honest lass, healthy and happy and good, and with that sort of beauty that comes of happiness and health. But her confusion lent her for the moment an additional charm.

"Good morning," said Otto, rising and moving toward her. "I arose early and was in a dream."

"Oh, sir!" she cried, "I wish to beg of you to spare my father; for I assure your Highness, if he had known who you was, he would have bitten his tongue out sooner. And Fritz, too—how he went on! But I had a notion; and this morning I went straight down into the stable, and there was your Highness's crown upon the stirrup-irons! But, oh, sir, I made certain you would spare them; for they were as innocent as lambs."

"My dear," said Otto, both amused and gratified, "you do not understand. It is I who am in the wrong; for I had no business to conceal my name and lead on these gentlemen to speak of me. And it is I who have to beg of you, that you will keep my secret and not betray the discourtesy of which I was guilty. As for any fear of me, your friends are safe in Gerolstein; and even in my own territory, you must be well aware I have no power."

"Oh, sir," she said, courtesying, "I would not say that: the huntsmen would all die for you."

"Happy Prince!" said Otto. "But although you are too courteous to avow the knowledge, you have had many opportunities of learning that I am a vain show. Only last night we heard it very clearly stated. You see the shadow flitting on this hard rock. Prince Otto, I am afraid, is but the moving shadow, and the name of the rock is Gondremark. Ah! if your friends had fallen foul of Gondremark! But happily the younger of the two admires him. And as for the old gentleman your father, he is a wise man and an excellent talker, and I would take a long wager he is honest."

"Oh, for honest, your Highness, that he is!" exclaimed the girl. "And Fritz is as honest as he. And as for all they said, it was just talk and nonsense. When country-folk get gossiping, they go on, I do assure you, for the fun; they don't as much as think of what they say. If you went to the next farm, it's my belief you would hear as much against my father."

"Nay, nay," said Otto, "there you go too fast. For all that was said against Prince Otto—"

"Oh, it was shameful!" cried the girl.

"Not shameful—true," returned Otto. "Oh, yes—true. I am all they said of me—all that and worse."

"I never!" cried Ottilia. "Is that how you do? Well, you would never be a soldier. Now if any one accuses me, I get up and give it them. Oh, I defend myself. I wouldn't take a fault at another person's hands, no, not if I had it on my forehead. And that's what you must do, if you mean to live it out. But, indeed, I never heard such nonsense. I should think you was ashamed of yourself? You're bald then, I suppose?"

"Oh no," said Otto, fairly laughing. "There I acquit myself: not bald!"

"Well, and good?" pursued the girl. "Come now, you know you are good, and I'll make you say so. . . . Your Highness, I beg your humble pardon. But there's no disrespect intended. And anyhow, you know you are."

"Why, now, what am I to say?" replied Otto. "You are a cook, and excellently well you do it; I embrace the chance of thanking you for the ragout. Well now, have you not seen good food so bedeviled by unskilful cookery that no one could be brought to eat the pudding? That is me, my dear. I am full of good ingredients, but the dish is worthless. I am—I give it you in one word—sugar in the salad."

"Well, I don't care, you're good," reiterated Ottilia, a little flushed by having failed to understand.

"I will tell you one thing," replied Otto: "You are!"

"Ah, well, that's what they all said of you," moralized the girl; "such a tongue to come round—such a flattering tongue!"

"Oh, you forget, I am a man of middle age," the Prince chuckled.

"Well, to speak to you, I should think you was a boy; and Prince or no Prince, if you came worrying where I was cooking, I would pin a napkin to your tails. . . . And, O Lord, I declare I hope your Highness will forgive me," the girl added. "I can't keep it in my mind."

"No more can I," cried Otto. "That is just what they complain of!"

They made a loverly looking couple; only the heavy pouring of that horse-tail of water made them raise their voices above lovers' pitch. But to a jealous onlooker from above, their mirth and close proximity might easily give umbrage; and a rough voice out of the tuft of brambles began calling on Ottilia by name. She changed color at that. "It is Fritz," she said. "I must go."

"Go, my dear, and I need not bid you go in peace, for I think you have discovered that I am not formidable at close quarters," said the Prince, and made her a fine gesture of dismissal.

So Ottilia skipped up the bank, and disappeared into the thicket, stopping once for a single blushing bob—blushing because she had in the interval once more forgotten and remembered the stranger's quality.

Otto returned to his rock promontory; but his humor had in the mean time changed. The sun now shone more fairly on the pool; and over its brown welling surface, the blue of heaven and the golden green of the spring foliage danced in fleeting arabesque. The eddies laughed and brightened with essential color. And the beauty of the dell began to rankle in the Prince's mind; it was so near to his own borders, yet without. He had never had much of the joy of possessorship in any of the thousand and one beautiful and curious things that were his; and now he was conscious of envy for what was another's. It was, indeed, a smiling, dilettante sort of envy; but yet there it was: the passion of Ahab for the vineyard, done in little; and he was relieved when Mr. Killian appeared upon the scene.

"I hope, sir, that you have slept well under my plain roof," said the old farmer.

"I am admiring this sweet spot that you are privileged to dwell in," replied Otto, evading the inquiry.

"It is rustic," returned Mr. Gottesheim, looking around him with complacency, "a very rustic corner; and some of the land to the west is most excellent fat land, excellent deep soil. You should see my wheat in the ten-acre field. There is not a farm in Grünewald, no, nor many in Gerolstein, to match the River Farm. Some sixty—I keep thinking when I sow—some sixty, and some seventy, and some an hundredfold; and my own place, six score! But that, sir, is partly the farming."

"And the stream has fish?" asked Otto.

"A fish-pond," said the farmer. "Ay, it is a pleasant bit. It is pleasant even here, if one had time, with the brook drumming in that black pool, and the green things hanging all about the rocks, and, dear heart, to see the very pebbles! all turned to gold and precious stones! But you have come to that time of life, sir, when, if you will excuse me, you must look to have the rheumatism set in. Thirty to forty is, as one may say, their seedtime. And this is a damp cold corner for the early morning and an empty stomach. If I might humbly advise you, sir, I would be moving."

"With all my heart," said Otto, gravely. "And so you have lived your life here?" he added, as they turned to go.

"Here I was born," replied the farmer, "and here I wish I could say I was to die. But fortune, sir, fortune turns the wheel. They say she is blind, but we will hope she only sees a little farther on. My grandfather and my father and I, we have all tilled these acres, my furrow following theirs. All the three names are on the garden bench, two Killians and one Johann. Yes, sir, good men have prepared themselves for the great change in my old garden. Well do I mind my father, in a woolen nightcap, the good soul, going round and round to see the last of it. "Killian," said he, "do you see the smoke of my tobacco? Why," said he, "that is man's life." It was his last pipe, and I believe he knew it; and it was a strange thing, without doubt, to leave the trees that he had planted, and the son that he had begotten, ay, sir, and even the old pipe with the Turk's head that he had smoked since he was a lad and went a-courting. But here we have no continuing city; and as for the eternal, it's a comfortable thought that we have other merits than our own. And yet you would hardly think how sore it goes against the grain with me, to die in a strange bed."

"And must you do so? For what reason?" Otto asked.

"The reason? The place is to be sold; three thousand crowns," replied Mr. Gottesheim. "Had it been a third of that, I may say without boasting that, what with my credit and my savings, I could have met the sum. But at three thousand, unless I have singular good fortune and the new proprietor continues me in office, there is nothing left me but to budge."

Otto's fancy for the place redoubled at the news, and became joined with other feelings. If all he heard were true, Grünewald was growing very hot for a sovereign Prince; it might be well to have a refuge; and if so, what more delightful hermitage could man imagine? Mr. Gottesheim, besides, had touched his sympathies. Every man loves in his soul to play the part of the stage deity. And to step down to the aid of the old farmer, who had so roughly handled him in talk, was the ideal of a Fair Revenge. Otto's thoughts brightened at the prospect, and he began to regard himself with a renewed respect.

"I can find you, I believe, a purchaser," he said, "and one who would continue to avail himself of your skill."

"Can you, sir, indeed?" said the old man. "Well, I shall be heartily obliged; for I begin to find a man may practise resignation all his days as he takes physic, and not come to like it in the end."

"If you will have the papers drawn, you may even burden the purchase with your interest," said Otto. "Let it be assured to you through life."

"Your friend, sir," insinuated Killian, "would not, perhaps, care to make the interest reversible? Fritz is a good lad."

"Fritz is young," said the Prince, dryly; "he must earn consideration, not inherit."

"He has long worked upon the place, sir," insisted Mr. Gottesheim; "and at my great age, for I am seventy-eight come harvest, it would be a troublesome thought to the proprietor how to fill my shoes. It would be a care spared to assure yourself of Fritz. And I believe he might be tempted by a permanency."

"The young man has unsettled views," returned Otto.

"Possible the purchaser—" began Killian.

A little spot of anger burned in Otto's cheek. "I am the purchaser," he said.

"It was what I might have guessed," replied the farmer, bowing with an aged, obsequious dignity. "You have made an old man very happy; and I may say, indeed, that I have entertained an angel unawares. Sir, the great people of this world—and by that I mean those who are great in station—if they had only hearts like yours, how they would make the fires burn and the poor sing!"

"I would not judge them hardly, sir," said Otto. "We all have our frailties."

"Truly, sir," said Mr. Gottesheim, with unction. "And by what name, sir, am I to address my generous landlord?"

The double recollection of an English traveler, whom he had received the week before at court, and of an old English rogue called Transome, whom he had known in youth, came pertinently to the Prince's help. "Transome," he answered, "is my name. I am an English traveler. It is, to-day, Tuesday. On Thursday, before noon, the money shall be ready. Let us meet, if you please, in Mittwalden, at the 'Morning Star.' "

"I am, in all things lawful, your servant to command," replied the farmer. "An Englishman! You are a great race of travelers. And has your lordship some experience of land?"

"I have had some interest of the kind before," returned the Prince; "not in Gerolstein, indeed. But fortune, as you say, turns the wheel, and I desire to be beforehand with her revolutions."

"Very right, sir, I am sure," said Mr. Killian.

They had been strolling with deliberation; but they were now drawing near to the farmhouse, mounting by the trellized pathway to the level of the meadow. A little before them, the sound of voices had been some while audible, and now grew louder and more distinct with every step of their advance.

Presently, when they emerged upon the top of the bank, they beheld Fritz and Ottilia some way off; he, very black and bloodshot, emphasizing his hoarse speech with the smacking of his fist against his palm; she, standing a little way off in blowsy, voluble distress.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Gottesheim, and made as if he would turn aside.

But Otto went straight toward the lovers, in whose dissension he believed himself to have a share. And, indeed, as soon as he had seen the Prince, Fritz had stood tragic, as if awaiting and defying his approach.

"Oh, here you are!" he cried, as soon as they were near enough for easy speech. "You are a man at least, and must reply. What were you after? Why were you two skulking in the bush? God!" he broke out, turning again upon Ottilia, "to think that I should waste my heart on you!"

"I beg your pardon," Otto cut in. "You were addressing me. In virtue of what circumstance am I to render you an account of this young lady's conduct? Are you her father? her brother? her husband?"

"Oh, sir, you know as well as I," returned the peasant. "We keep company, she and I. I love her, and she is by way of loving me; but all shall be aboveboard, I would have her to know. I have a good pride of my own."

"Why, I perceive I must explain to you what love is," said Otto. "Its measure is kindness. It is very possible that you are proud; but she, too, may have some self-esteem; I do not speak for myself. And perhaps, if your own doings were so curiously examined, you might find it inconvenient to reply."

"These are all set-offs," said the young man. "You know very well that a man is a man, and a woman only a woman. That holds good all over, up and down. I ask you a question, I ask it again, and here I stand." He drew a mark and toed it.

"When you have studied liberal doctrines somewhat deeper," said the Prince, "you will perhaps change your note. You are a man of false weights and measures, my young friend. You have one scale for women, another for men; one for princes, and one for farmer-folk. On the prince who neglects his wife you can be most severe. But what of the lover who insults his mistress? You use the name of love. I should think this lady might very fairly ask to be delivered from love of such a nature. For if I, a stranger, had been one-tenth part so gross and so discourteous, you would most righteously have broken my head. It would have been in your part, as lover, to protect her from such insolence. Protect her first, then, from yourself."

"Ay," quoth Mr. Gottesheim, who had been looking on with his hands behind his tall old back, "ay, that's scripture truth."

Fritz was staggered, not only by the Prince's imperturbable superiority of manner, but by a glimmering consciousness that he himself was in the wrong. The appeal to liberal doctrines had, besides, unmanned him.

"Well," said he, "if I was rude, I'll own to it. I meant no ill, and did nothing out of my just rights; but I am above all these old vulgar notions too; and if I spoke sharp, I'll ask her pardon."

"Freely granted, Fritz," said Ottilia.

"But all this doesn't answer me," cried Fritz. "I ask what you two spoke about. She says she promised not to tell; well, then, I mean to know. Civility is civility; but I'll be no man's gull. I have a right to common justice, if I *do* keep company!"

"If you will ask Mr. Gottesheim," replied Otto, "you will find I have not spent my hours in idleness. I have, since I arose this morning, agreed to buy the farm. So far I will go to satisfy a curiosity which I condemn."

"Oh, well, if there was business, that's another matter," returned Fritz. "Though it beats me why you could not tell. But, of course, if the gentleman is to buy the farm, I suppose there would naturally be an end."

"To be sure," said Mr. Gottesheim, with a strong accent of conviction.

But Ottilia was much braver. "There now!" she cried in triumph. "What did I tell you? I told you I was fighting your battles. Now you see! Think shame of your suspicious temper! You should go down upon your bended knees both to that gentleman and me."

CHAPTER IV

IN WHICH THE PRINCE COLLECTS OPINIONS BY THE WAY

A LITTLE before noon Otto, by a triumph of maneuvering, effected his escape. He was quit in this way of the ponderous gratitude of Mr. Killian, and of the confidential gratitude of poor Ottilia; but of Fritz he was not quit so readily. That young politician, brimming with mysterious glances, offered to lend his convoy as far as to the highroad; and Otto, in fear of some residuary jealousy and for the girl's sake, had not the courage to gainsay him; but he regarded his companion with uneasy glances, and devoutly wished the business at an end. For some time Fritz walked by the mare in silence; and they had already traversed more than half the proposed distance when, with something of a blush, he looked up and opened fire.

"Are you not," he asked, "what they call a socialist?"

"Why, no," returned Otto, "not precisely what they call so. Why do you ask?"

"I will tell you why," said the young man. "I saw from the first that you were a red progressional, and nothing but the fear of old Killian kept you back. And there, sir, you were right: old men are always cowards. But nowadays, you see, there are so many groups: you can never tell how far the likeliest kind of man may be prepared to go; and I was never sure you were one of the strong thinkers, till you hinted about women and free love."

"Indeed," cried Otto, "I never said a word of such a thing.

"Not you!" cried Fritz. "Never a word to compromise! You was sowing seed: ground-bait, our president calls it. But it's hard to deceive me, for I know all the agitators and their ways, and all the doctrines; and between you and me," lowering his voice, "I am myself affiliated. Oh, yes, I am a secret society man, and here is my medal." And drawing out a green ribbon that he wore about his neck he held up, for Otto's inspection, a pewter medal bearing the imprint of a Phœnix and the legend, *Libertas*. "And so now you see you may trust me," added Fritz. "I am none of your ale-house talkers; I am a convinced revolutionary." And he looked meltingly upon Otto.

"I see," replied the Prince; "that is very gratifying. Well, sir, the great thing for the good of one's country is, first of all, to be a good man. All springs from there. For my part, although you are right in thinking that I have to do with politics, I am unfit by intellect and temper for a leading *rôle*. I was intended, I fear, for a subaltern. Yet we have all something to command, Mr. Fritz, if it be only our own temper; and a man about to marry must look closely to himself. The husband's, like the prince's, is a very artificial standing; and it is hard to be kind in either. Do you follow that?"

"Oh, yes, I follow that," replied the young man, sadly chop-fallen over the nature of the information he had elicited; and then brightening up: "Is it," he ventured, "is it for an arsenal that you have bought the farm?"

"We'll see about that," the Prince answered, laughing. "You must not be too zealous. And in the mean time, if I were you, I would say nothing on the subject."

"Oh, trust me, sir, for that," cried Fritz as he pocketed a crown. "And you've let nothing out; for I suspected —I might say I knew it—from the first. And mind you, when a guide is required," he added, "I know all the forest paths."

Otto rode away, chuckling. This talk with Fritz had vastly entertained him; nor was he altogether discontented with his bearing at the farm; men, he was able to tell himself, had behaved worse under smaller provocation. And, to harmonize all, the road and the April air were both delightful to his soul.

Up and down, and to and fro, ever mounting through the wooded foothills, the broad, white highroad wound onward into Grünewald. On either hand the pines stood coolly rooted—green moss prospering, springs welling forth between their knuckled spurs; and though some were broad and stalwart, and others spiry and slender, yet all stood firm in the same attitude and with the same expression, like a silent army presenting arms.

The road lay all the way apart from towns and villages, which it left on either hand. Here and there, indeed, in the bottom of green glens, the Prince could spy a few congregated roofs, or perhaps above him, on the shoulder, the solitary cabin of a woodman. But the highway was an international undertaking, and with its face set for distant cities, scorned the little life of Grünewald. Hence it was exceeding solitary. Near the frontier Otto met a detachment of his own troops marching in the hot dust; and he was recognized and somewhat feebly cheered as he rode by. But from that time forth and for a long while he was alone with the great woods.

Gradually the spell of pleasure relaxed; his own thoughts returned, like stinging insects, in a cloud; and the talk of the night before, like a shower of buffets, fell upon his memory. He looked east and west for any comforter; and presently he was aware of a crossroad coming steeply down hill, and a horseman cautiously descending. A human voice or presence, like a spring in the desert, was now welcome in itself, and Otto drew bridle to await the coming of this stranger. He proved to be a very red-faced, thick-lipped countryman, with a pair of fat saddle-bags and a stone bottle at his waist; who, as soon as the Prince hailed him, jovially, if somewhat thickly, answered. At the same time he gave a beery yaw in the saddle. It was clear his bottle was no longer full.

"Do you ride toward Mittwalden?" asked the Prince.

"As far as the crossroad to Tannenbrunn," the man replied. "Will you bear company?"

"With pleasure. I have even waited for you on the chance," answered Otto.

By this time they were close alongside; and the man, with the countryfolk instinct, turned his cloudy vision first of all on his companion's mount. "The devil!" he cried. "You ride a bonny mare, friend!" And then, his curiosity being satisfied about the essential, he turned his attention to that merely secondary matter, his companion's face. He started. "The Prince!" he cried, saluting, with another yaw that came near dismounting him. "I beg your pardon, your Highness, not to have reco'nized you at once."

The Prince was vexed out of his self-possession. "Since you know me," he said, "it is unnecessary we should ride together. I will precede you, if you please." And he was about to set spur to the gray mare, when the half-drunken fellow, reaching over, laid his hand upon the rein.

"Hark you," he said, "prince or no prince, that is not how one man should conduct himself with another. What! You'll ride with me incog. and set me talking! But if I know you, you'll preshede me, if you please! Spy!" And the fellow, crimson with drink and injured vanity, almost spat the word into the Prince's face.

A horrid confusion came over Otto. He perceived that he had acted rudely, grossly presuming on his station. And perhaps a little shiver of physical alarm mingled with his remorse, for the fellow was very powerful and not more than half in the possession of his senses. "Take your hand from my rein," he said with a sufficient assumption of command; and when the man, rather to his wonder, had obeyed: "You should understand, sir," he added, "that while I might be glad to ride with you as one person of sagacity with another, and so receive your true opinions, it would amuse me very little to hear the empty compliments you would address to me as Prince."

"You think I would lie, do you?" cried the man with the bottle, purpling deeper.

"I know you would," returned Otto, entering entirely into his self-possession. "You would not even show me the medal you wear about your neck." For he had caught a glimpse of a green ribbon at the fellow's throat.

The change was instantaneous: the red face became mottled with yellow; a thick-fingered, tottering hand made a clutch at the telltale ribbon. "Medal!" the man cried, wonderfully sobered. "I have no medal."

"Pardon me," said the Prince. "I will even tell you what that medal bears: a Phœnix burning, with the word *Libertas.*" The medalist remaining speechless, "You are a pretty fellow," continued Otto, smiling, "to complain of incivility from the man whom you conspire to murder."

"Murder!" protested the man. "Nay, never that; nothing criminal for me!"

"You are strangely misinformed," said Otto. "Conspiracy itself is criminal, and insures the pain of death. Nay, sir, death it is; I will guarantee my accuracy. Not that you need be so deplorably affected, for I am no officer. But those who mingle with politics should look at both sides of the medal."

"Your Highness . . ." began the knight of the bottle.

"Nonsense! you are a Republican," cried Otto; "what have you to do with highnesses? But let us continue to ride forward. Since you so much desire it, I can not find it in my heart to deprive you of my company. And for that matter, I have a question to address to you. Why, being so great a body of men—for you are a great body—fifteen thousand, I have heard, but that will be understated; am I right?"

The man gurgled in his throat.

"Why, then, being so considerable a party," resumed Otto, "do you not come before me boldly with your wants?—what do I say? with your commands? Have I the name of being passionately devoted to my throne? I can scarce suppose it. Come, then; show me your majority, and I will instantly resign. Tell this to your friends; assure them from me of my docility; assure them that, however they conceive of my deficiencies, they can not suppose me more unfit to be a ruler than I do myself. I am one of the worst princes in Europe; will they improve on that?"

"Far be it from me . . ." the man began.

"See, now, if you will not defend my government!" cried Otto. "If I were you, I would leave conspiracies. You are as little fit to be a conspirator as I to be a king."

"One thing I will say out," said the man. "It is not so much you that we complain of; it's your lady."

"Not a word, sir," said the Prince; and then after a moment's pause, and in tones of some anger and contempt: "I once more advise you to have done with politics," he added; "and when next I see you, let me see you sober. A morning drunkard is the last man to sit in judgment even upon the worst of princes."

"I have had a drop, but I had not been drinking," the man replied, triumphing in a sound distinction. "And if I had, what then? Nobody hangs by me. But my mill is standing idle, and I blame it on your wife. Am I alone in that? Go round and ask. Where are the mills? Where are the young men that should be working? Where is the currency? All paralyzed. No, sir, it is not equal; for I suffer for your faults—I pay for them, by George, out of a poor man's pocket. And what have you to do with mine? Drunk or sober, I can see my country going to hell, and I can see whose fault it is. And so now, I've said my say, and you may drag me to a stinking dungeon; what care I? I've spoken the truth, and so I'll hold hard, and not intrude upon your Highness's society."

And the miller reined up and, clumsily enough, saluted.

"You will observe, I have not asked your name," said Otto. "I wish you a good ride," and he rode on hard. But let him ride as he pleased, this interview with the miller was a chokepear, which he could not swallow. He had begun by receiving a reproof in manners, and ended by sustaining a defeat in logic, both from a man whom he despised. All his old thoughts returned with fresher venom. And by three in the afternoon, coming to the crossroads for Beckstein, Otto decided to turn aside and dine there leisurely. Nothing at least could be worse than to go on as he was going.

In the inn at Beckstein he remarked, immediately upon his entrance, an intelligent young gentleman dining, with a book in front of him. He had his own place laid close to the reader, and with a proper apology, broke ground by asking what he read.

"I am perusing," answered the young gentleman, "the last work of the Herr Doctor Hohenstockwitz, cousin and librarian of your Prince here in Grünewald—a man of great erudition and some lambencies of wit."

"I am acquainted," said Otto, "with the Herr Doctor, though not yet with his work."

"Two privileges that I must envy you," replied the young man, politely: "an honor in hand, a pleasure in the bush."

"The Herr Doctor is a man much respected, I believe, for his attainments?" asked the Prince.

"He is, sir, a remarkable instance of the force of intellect," replied the reader. "Who of our young men know anything of his cousin, all reigning Prince although he be? Who but has heard of Doctor Gotthold? But intellectual merit, alone of all distinctions, has its base in nature."

"I have the gratification of addressing a student—perhaps an author?" Otto suggested.

The young man somewhat flushed. "I have some claim to both distinctions, sir, as you suppose," said he; "there is my card. I am the licentiate Roederer, author of several works on the theory and practice of politics."

"You immensely interest me," said the Prince; "the more so as I gather that here in Grünewald we are on the brink of revolution. Pray, since these have been your special studies, would you augur hopefully of such a movement?"

"I perceive," said the young author, with a certain vinegary twitch, "that you are unacquainted with my opuscula. I am a convinced authoritarian. I share none of those illusory, Utopian fancies with which empirics blind themselves and exasperate the ignorant. The day of these ideas is, believe me, past, or at least passing."

"When I look about me—" began Otto.

"When you look about you," interrupted the licentiate, "you behold the ignorant. But in the laboratory of opinion, beside the studious lamp, we begin already to discard these figments. We begin to return to nature's order, to what I might call, if I were to borrow from the language of therapeutics, the expectant treatment of abuses. You will not misunderstand me," he continued: "a country in the condition in which we find Grünewald, a prince such as your Prince Otto, we must explicitly condemn; they are behind the age. But I would look for a remedy not to brute convulsions, but to the natural supervenience of a more able sovereign. I should amuse you, perhaps," added the licentiate, with a smile, "I think I should amuse you if I were to explain my notion of a prince. We who have studied in the closet, no longer, in this age, propose ourselves for active service. The paths, we have perceived, are incompatible. I would not have a student on the throne, though I would have one near by for an adviser. I would set forward as prince a man of a good, medium understanding, lively rather than deep; a man of courtly manner, possessed of the double art to ingratiate and command, receptive, accommodating, seductive. I have been observing you since your first entrance. Well, sir, were I a subject of Grünewald I should pray heaven to set upon the seat of government just such another as yourself."

"The devil, you would!" exclaimed the Prince.

The licentiate Roederer, laughed most heartily. "I thought I should astonish you," he said. "These are not the ideas of the masses."

"They are not, I can assure you," Otto said.

"Or rather," distinguished the licentiate, "not to-day. The time will come, however, when these ideas shall prevail."

"You will permit me, sir, to doubt it," said Otto.

"Modesty is always admirable," chuckled the theorist. "But yet I assure you, a man like you, with such a man as, say, Doctor Gotthold at your elbow, would be, for all practical issues, my ideal ruler."

At this rate the hours sped pleasantly for Otto. But the licentiate unfortunately slept that night at Beckstein, where he was, being dainty in the saddle and given to half stages. And to find a convoy to Mittwalden, and thus mitigate the company of his own thoughts, the Prince had to make favor with a certain party of wood merchants from the various states of the empire, who had been drinking together somewhat noisily at the far end of the apartment.

The night had already fallen when they took the saddle.

The merchants were very loud and mirthful; each had a face like a nor'west moon; and they played pranks with each others' horses, and mingled songs and choruses, and alternately remembered and forgot the companion of their ride. Otto thus combined society and solitude, harkening now to their chattering and empty talk, now to the voices of the encircling forest. The starlit dark, the faint wood airs, the clank of the horseshoes making broken music, accorded together and attuned his mind. And he was still in a most equal temper when the party reached the top of that long hill that overlooks Mittwalden.

Down in the bottom of a bowl of forest, the lights of the little formal town glittered in a pattern, street crossing street; away by itself on the right, the palace was glowing like a factory.

Although he knew not Otto, one of the wood merchants was a native of the state. "There," said he, pointing to the palace with his whip, "there is Jezebel's inn."

"What, do you call it that?" cried another, laughing.

"Ay, that's what they call it," returned the Grünewalder; and he broke into a song, which the rest, as people well acquainted with the words and air, instantly took up in chorus. Her Serene Highness Amalia Seraphina, Princess of Grünewald, was the heroine, Gondremark the hero of this ballad. Shame hissed in Otto's ears. He reined up short and sat stunned in the saddle; and the singers continued to descend the hill without him.

The song went to a rough, swashing, popular air; and long after the words became inaudible the swing of the music, rising and falling, echoed insult in the Prince's brain. He fled the sounds. Hard by him on his right a road struck toward the palace, and he followed it through the thick shadows and branching alleys of the park. It was a busy place on a fine summer's afternoon, when the court and burghers met and saluted; but at that hour of the night in the early spring it was deserted to the roosting birds. Hares rustled among the covert; here and there a statue stood glimmering, with its eternal gesture; here and there the echo of an imitation temple clattered ghostly to the trampling of the mare. Ten minutes brought him to the upper end of his own home garden, where the small stables opened, over a bridge, upon the park. The yard clock was striking the hour of ten; so was the big bell in the palace bell-tower; and, farther off, the belfries of the town. About the stable all else was silent but the stamping of stalled horses and the rattle of halters. Otto dismounted; and as he did so a memory came back to him: a whisper of dishonest grooms and stolen corn, once heard, long forgotten, and now recurring in the nick of opportunity. He crossed the bridge, and, going up to a window, knocked six or seven heavy blows in a particular cadence, and, as he did so, smiled. Presently a wicket was opened in the gate, and a man's head appeared in the dim starlight.

"Nothing to-night," said a voice.

"Bring a lantern," said the Prince.

"Dear heart a' mercy!" cried the groom. "Who's that?"

"It is I, the Prince," replied Otto. "Bring a lantern, take in the mare, and let me through into the garden."

The man remained silent for a while, his head still projecting through the wicket.

"His Highness!" he said at last. "And why did your Highness knock so strange?"

"It is a superstition in Mittwalden," answered Otto, "that it cheapens corn."

With a sound like a sob the groom fled. He was very white when he returned, even by the light of the lantern; and his hand trembled as he undid the fastenings and took the mare.

"Your Highness," he began at last, "for God's sake . . ." And there he paused, oppressed with guilt.

"For God's sake, what?" asked Otto, cheerfully. "For God's sake, let us have cheaper corn, say I. Good night!" And he strode off into the garden, leaving the groom petrified once more.

The garden descended by a succession of stone terraces to the level of the fish-pond. On the far side the ground rose again, and was crowned by the confused roofs and gables of the palace. The modern pillared front, the ball-room, the great library, the princely apartments, the busy and illuminated quarters of that great house, all faced the town. The garden side was much older; and here it was almost dark; only a few windows quietly lighted at various elevations. The great square tower rose, thinning by stages like a telescope; and on the top of all the flag hung motionless.

The garden, as it now lay in the dusk and glimmer of the starshine, breathed of April violets. Under night's cavern arch the shrubs obscurely bustled. Through the plotted terraces and down the marble stairs the Prince rapidly descended, fleeing before uncomfortable thoughts. But, alas! from these there is no city of refuge. And now, when he was about midway of the descent, distant strains of music began to fall upon his ear from the ball-room, where the court was dancing. They reached him faint and broken, but they touched the keys of memory; and through and above them, Otto heard the ranting melody of the wood merchant's song. Mere blackness seized upon his mind. Here he was coming home; the wife was dancing, the husband had been playing a trick upon a lackey; and meanwhile, all about them, they were a byword to their subjects. Such a prince, such a husband, such a man, as this Otto had become! And he sped the faster onward.

Some way below he came unexpectedly upon a sentry; yet a little further, and he was challenged by a second; and as he crossed the bridge over the fish-pond, an officer making the rounds stopped him once more. The parade of watch was more than usual; but curiosity was dead in Otto's mind, and he only chafed at the interruption. The porter of the back postern admitted him, and started to behold him so disordered. Thence, hasting by private stairs and passages, he came at length unseen to his own chamber, tore off his clothes, and threw himself upon his bed in the dark. The music of the ball-room still continued to a very lively measure; and still, behind that, he heard in spirit the chorus of the merchants clanking down the hill.

PART II

OF LOVE AND POLITICS

CHAPTER I

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE LIBRARY

AT A quarter before six on the following morning Doctor Gotthold was already at his desk in the library; and with a small cup of black coffee at his elbow, and an eye occasionally wandering to the busts and the long array of many-colored books, was quietly reviewing the labors of the day before. He was a man of about forty, flaxen-haired, with refined features a little worn, and bright eyes somewhat faded. Early to bed and early to rise, his life was devoted to two things: erudition and Rhine wine. An ancient friendship existed latent between him and Otto; they rarely met, but when they did it was to take up at once the thread of their suspended intimacy. Gotthold, the virgin priest of knowledge, had envied his cousin, for half a day, when he was married; he had never envied him his throne.

Reading was not a popular diversion at the court of Grünewald; and that great, pleasant, sunshiny gallery of books and statues was, in practise, Gotthold's private cabinet. On this particular Wednesday morning, however, he had not been long about his manuscript when a door opened and the Prince stepped into the apartment. The Doctor watched him as he drew near, receiving, from each of the embayed windows in succession, a flush of morning sun; and Otto looked so gay, and walked so airily, he was so well dressed and brushed and frizzled, so point-device, and of such a sovereign elegance, that the heart of his cousin the recluse was rather moved against him.

"Good morning, Gotthold," said Otto, dropping in a chair.

"Good morning, Otto," returned the librarian. "You are an early bird. Is this an accident, or do you begin reforming?"

"It is about time, I fancy," answered the Prince.

"I can not imagine," said the Doctor. "I am too skeptical to be an ethical adviser; and as for good resolutions, I believed in them when I was wrong. They are the colors of hope's rainbow."

"If you come to think of it," said Otto, "I am not a popular sovereign." And with a look he changed his statement to a question.

"Popular? Well, there I would distinguish," answered Gotthold, leaning back and joining the tips of his fingers. "There are various kinds of popularity; the bookish, which is perfectly impersonal, as unreal as the nightmare; the politician's, a mixed variety; and yours, which is the most personal of all. Women take to you; footmen adore you; it is as natural to like you as to pat a dog; and were you a saw-miller you would be the most popular citizen in Grünewald. As a prince—well, you are in the wrong trade. It is perhaps philosophical to recognize it as you do."

"Perhaps philosophical?" repeated Otto.

"Yes, perhaps. I would not be dogmatic," answered Gotthold.

"Perhaps philosophical, and certainly not virtuous," Otto resumed.

"Not of a Roman virtue," chuckled the recluse.

Otto drew his chair nearer to the table, leaned upon it with his elbow, and looked his cousin squarely in the face.

"In short," he asked, "not manly?"

"Well," Gotthold hesitated, "not manly, if you will." And then with a laugh, "I did not know that you gave yourself out to be manly," he added. "It was one of the points that I inclined to like about you; inclined, I believe, to admire. The names of virtues exercise a charm on most of us; we must lay claim to all of them, however incompatible; we must all be both daring and prudent; we must all vaunt our pride and go to the stake for our humility. Not so you. Without compromise you were yourself a pretty sight. I have always said it: none so void of all pretense as Otto."

"Pretense and effort both!" cried Otto. "A dead dog in a canal is more alive. And the question, Gotthold, the question that I have to face is this: Can I not, with effort and self-denial, can I not become a tolerable sovereign?"

"Never," replied Gotthold. "Dismiss the notion. And besides, dear child, you would not try."

"Nay, Gotthold, I am not to be put by," said Otto. "If I am constitutionally unfit to be a sovereign, what am I doing with this money, with this palace, with these guards? And I—a thief—am to execute the law on others?"

"I admit the difficulty," said Gotthold.

"Well, can I not try?" continued Otto. "Am I not bound to try? And with the advice and help of such a man as you—"

"Me!" cried the librarian. "Now, God forbid!"

Otto, though he was in no very smiling humor, could not forbear to smile. "Yet I was told last night," he laughed, "that with a man like me to impersonate, and a man like you to touch the springs, a very possible government could be composed."

"Now I wonder in what diseased imagination," Gotthold said, "that preposterous monster saw the light of day?"

"It was one of your own trade—a writer, one Roederer," said Otto.

"Roederer! an ignorant puppy!" cried the librarian.

"You are ungrateful," said Otto. "He is one of your professed admirers."

"Is he?" cried Gotthold, obviously impressed. "Come, that is a good account of the young man. I must read his stuff again. It is the rather to his credit, as our views are opposite. The east and west are not more opposite. Can I have converted him? But no; the incident belongs to Fairyland."

"You are not then," asked the Prince, "an authoritarian?"

"I? God bless me, no!" said Gotthold. " I am a red, dear child."

"That brings me to my next point, and by a natural transition. If I am so clearly unfitted for my post," the Prince asked; "if my friends admit it, if my subjects clamor for my downfall, if revolution is preparing at this hour, must I not go forth to meet the inevitable? Should I not save these horrors and be done with these absurdities? In a word, should I not abdicate? Oh, believe me, I feel the ridicule, the vast abuse of language," he added, wincing, "but even a principulus like me can not resign; he must make a great gesture, and come buskined forth, and abdicate."

"Ay," said Gotthold, "or else stay where he is. What gnat has bitten you to-day? Do you not know that you are touching, with lay hands, the very holiest inwards of philosophy, where madness dwells? Ay, Otto, madness; for in the serene temples of the wise, the inmost shrine, which we carefully keep locked, is full of spiders' webs. All men, all, are fundamentally useless; nature tolerates, she does not need, she does not use them: sterile flowers! All—down to the fellow swinking in a byre, whom fools point out for the exception—all are useless; all weave ropes of sand; or like a child that has breathed on a window, write and obliterate, write and obliterate, idle words! Talk of it no more. That way, I tell you, madness lies." The speaker rose from his chair and then sat down again. He laughed a little laugh and then, changing his tone, resumed: "Yes, dear child, we are not here to do battle with giants; we are here to be happy like the flowers, if we can be. It is because you could, that I have always secretly admired you. Cling to that trade; believe me, it is the right one. Be happy, be idle, be airy. To the devil with all casuistry! and leave the state to Gondremark, as heretofore. He does it well enough, they say; and his vanity enjoys the situation."

"Gotthold," cried Otto, "what is this to me? Useless is not the question; I can not rest at uselessness; I must be useful or I must be noxious—one or other. I grant you the whole thing, prince and principality alike, is pure absurdity, a stroke of satire; and that a banker or the man who keeps an inn has graver duties. But now, when I have washed my hands of it three years, and left all—labor, responsibility, and honor and enjoyment too, if there be any—to Gondremark and—to Seraphina—" He hesitated at the name, and Gotthold glanced aside. "Well," the Prince continued, "what has come of it? Taxes, army, cannon—why, it's like a box of lead soldiers! And the people sick at the folly of it and fired with the injustice! And war, too—I hear of war—war in the teapot! What a complication of absurdity and disgrace! And when the inevitable end arrives—the revolution—who will be to blame in the sight of God, who will be gibbeted in public opinion? I! Prince Puppet!"

"I thought you had despised public opinion," said Gotthold.

"I did," said Otto, somberly, "but now I do not. I am growing old. And then, Gotthold, there is Seraphina. She is loathed in this country that I brought her to and suffered her to spoil. Yes, I gave it her as a plaything, and she has broken it: a fine Prince, an admirable Princess! Even her life—I ask you, Gotthold, is her life safe?"

"It is safe enough to-day," replied the librarian; "but since you ask me seriously, I would not answer for to-morrow. She is ill-advised."

"And by whom? By this Gondremark, to whom you counsel me to leave my country," cried the Prince. "Rare advice! The course that I have been following all these years, to come at last to this. Oh, ill-advised! if that were all! See now, there is no sense in beating about the bush between two men: you know what scandal says of her?"

Gotthold, with pursed lips, silently nodded.

"Well, come, you are not very cheering as to my conduct as the Prince; have I even done my duty as a husband?" Otto asked.

"Nay, nay," said Gotthold, earnestly and eagerly, "this is another chapter. I am an old celibate, an old monk. I can not advise you in your marriage."

"Nor do I require advice," said Otto, rising. "All of this must cease." And he began to walk to and fro with his hands behind his back.

"Well, Otto, may God guide you!" said Gotthold, after a considerable silence. "I can not."

"From what does all this spring?" said the Prince, stopping in his walk. "What am I to call it? Diffidence? The fear of ridicule? Inverted vanity? What matter names, if it has brought me to this? I could never bear to be bustling about nothing; I was ashamed of this toy kingdom from the first; I could not tolerate that people should fancy I believed in a thing so patently absurd! I would do nothing that can not be done smiling. I have a sense of humor forsooth! I must know better than my maker. And it was the same thing in my marriage," he added more hoarsely. "I did not believe this girl could care for me; I must not intrude; I must preserve the foppery of my indifference. What an impotent picture!"

"Ay, we have the same blood," moralized Gotthold. "You are drawing, with fine strokes, the character of the born skeptic."

"Skeptic?—coward!" cried Otto. "Coward is the word. A springless putty-hearted, cowering coward!"

And as the Prince rapped out the words in tones of unusual vigor, a little, stout, old gentleman, opening a door behind Gotthold received them fairly in the face. With his parrot's beak for a nose, his pursed mouth, his little goggling eyes, he was the picture of formality; and in ordinary circumstances, strutting behind the drum of his corporation, he impressed the beholder with a certain air of frozen dignity and wisdom. But at the smallest contrariety, his trembling hands and disconnected gestures betrayed the weakness at the root. And now, when he was thus surprisingly received in that library of Mittwalden Palace, which was the customary haunt of silence, his hands went up into the air as if he had been shot, and he cried aloud with the scream of an old woman.

"Oh," he gasped, recovering, "your Highness! I beg ten thousand pardons. But your Highness at such an hour in the library!—a circumstance so unusual as your Highness's presence was a thing I could not be expected to foresee."

"There is no harm done, Herr Cancellarius," said Otto.

"I came upon the errand of a moment: some papers I left overnight with the Herr Doctor," said the Chancellor of Grünewald. "Herr Doctor, if you will kindly give me them, I will intrude no longer."

Gotthold unlocked a drawer and handed a bundle of manuscript to the old gentleman, who prepared, with fitting salutations, to take his departure.

"Herr Greisengesang, since we have met," said Otto, "let us talk."

"I am honored by his Highness's commands," replied the Chancellor.

"All has been quiet since I left?" asked the Prince, resuming his seat.

"The usual business, your Highness," answered Greisengesang; "punctual trifles: huge, indeed, if neglected, but trifles when discharged. Your Highness is most zealously obeyed."

"Obeyed, Herr Cancellarius?" returned the Prince. "And when have I obliged you with an order? Replaced, let us rather say. But to touch upon these trifles; instance me a few."

"The routine of government, from which your Highness has so wisely dissociated his leisure . . . ." began Greisengesang.

"We will leave my leisure, sir," said Otto. "Approach the facts."

"The routine of business was proceeded with," replied the official, now visibly twittering.

"It is very strange, Herr Cancellarius, that you should so persistently avoid my questions," said the Prince. "You tempt me to suppose a purpose in your dulness. I have asked you whether all was quiet: do me the pleasure to reply."

"Perfectly—Oh, perfectly quiet," jerked the ancient puppet, with every signal of untruth.

"I make a note of these words," said the Prince, gravely. "You assure me, your sovereign, that since the date of my departure nothing has occurred of which you owe me an account."

"I take your Highness, I take the Herr Doctor to witness," cried Greisengesang, "that I have had no such expression."

"Halt!" said the Prince; and then, after a pause: "Herr Greisengesang, you are an old man, and you served my father before you served me," he added. "It consists neither with your dignity nor mine, that you should babble excuses and stumble possibly upon untruths. Collect your thoughts; and then categorically inform me of all you have been charged to hide."

Gotthold, stooping very low over his desk, appeared to have resumed his labors; but his shoulders heaved with subterranean merriment. The Prince waited, drawing his handkerchief quietly through his fingers.

"Your Highness, in this informal manner," said the old gentleman at last, "and being unavoidably deprived of documents, it would be difficult, it would be impossible, to do justice to the somewhat grave occurrences which have transpired."

"I will not criticize your attitude," replied the Prince. "I desire that, between you and me, all should be done gently; for I have not forgotten, my old friend, that you were kind to me from the first, and for a period of years a faithful servant. I will thus dismiss the matters on which you waive immediate inquiry. But you have certain papers actually in your hand. Come, Herr Greisengesang, there is at least one point for which you have authority. Enlighten me on that."

"On that?" cried the old gentleman. "Oh, that is a trifle; a matter, your Highness, of police; a detail of a purely administrative order. These are simply a selection of the papers seized upon the English traveler."

"Seized?" echoed Otto. "In what sense? Explain yourself."

"Sir John Crabtree," interposed Gotthold, looking up, "was arrested yesterday evening."

"Is this so, Herr Cancellarius?" demanded Otto, sternly.

"It was judged right, your Highness," protested Greisengesang. "The decree was in due form, invested with your Highness's authority by procuration. I am but an agent; I had no status to prevent the measure."

"This man, my guest, has been arrested," said the Prince. "On what grounds, sir? With what color of pretense?"

The Chancellor stammered.

"Your Highness will perhaps find the reason in these documents," said Gotthold, pointing with the tail of his pen.

Otto thanked his cousin with a look. "Give them to me," he said, addressing the Chancellor.

But that gentleman visibly hesitated to obey. "Baron von Gondremark," he said, "has made the affair his own. I am in this case a mere messenger; and as such, I am not clothed with any capacity to communicate the documents I carry. Herr Doctor, I am convinced you will not fail to bear me out."

"I have heard a great deal of nonsense," said Gotthold, "and most of it from you; but this beats all."

"Come, sir," said Otto, rising, "the papers I command."

Herr Greisengesang instantly gave way.

"With your Highness's permission," he said, "and laying at his feet my most submiss apologies, I will now hasten to attend his further orders in the Chancery."

"Herr Cancellarius, do you see this chair?" said Otto. "There is where you shall attend my further orders. Oh, now, no more!" he cried, with a gesture, as the old man opened his lips. "You have sufficiently marked your zeal to your employer; and I begin to weary of a moderation you abuse."

The Chancellor moved to the appointed chair and took his seat in silence.

"And now," said Otto, opening the roll, "what is all this? it looks like the manuscript of a book."

"It is," said Gotthold, "the manuscript of a book of travels."

"You have read it, Doctor Hohenstockwitz?" asked the Prince.

"Nay, I but saw the title page," replied Gotthold. "But the roll was given to me open, and I heard no word of any secrecy."

Otto dealt the Chancellor an angry glance.

"I see," he went on. "The papers of an author seized at this date of the world's history, in a state so petty and so ignorant as Grünewald, here is indeed an ignominious folly. Sir," to the Chancellor, "I marvel to find you in so scurvy an employment. On your conduct to your Prince I will not dwell; but to descend to be a spy! For what else can it be called? To seize the papers of this gentleman, the private papers of a stranger, the toil of a life, perhaps—to open, and to read them. And what have we to do with books? The Herr Doctor might perhaps be asked for his advice; but we have no *index expurgatorius* in Grünewald. Had we but that, we should be the most absolute parody and farce upon this tawdry earth."

Yet, even while Otto spoke, he had continued to unfold the roll; and now, when it lay fully open, his eye rested on the title page elaborately written in red ink. It ran thus:

"Memoirs
of a Visit to the Various
Courts of Europe
by
Sir John Crabtree, Baronet."

Below was a list of chapters, each bearing the name of one of the European Courts; and among these the nineteenth and the last upon the list was dedicated to Grünewald.

"Ah! The Court of Grünewald!" said Otto, "that should be droll reading."

And his curiosity itched for it.

"A methodical dog, this English Baronet," said Gotthold. "Each chapter written and finished on the spot. I shall look for his work when it appears."

"It would be odd, now, just to glance at it," said Otto, wavering.

Gotthold's brow darkened, and he looked out of window.

But though the Prince understood the reproof, his weakness prevailed. "I will," he said, with an uneasy laugh, "I will, I think, just glance at it."

So saying, he resumed his seat and spread the traveler's manuscript upon the table.

CHAPTER II

"ON THE COURT OF GRUNEWALD," BEING A PORTION OF THE TRAVELER'S MANUSCRIPT

IT MAY well be asked (*it was thus the English traveler began his nineteenth chapter*) why I should have chosen Grünewald out of so many other states equally petty, formal, dull, and corrupt. Accident, indeed, decided, and not I; but I have seen no reason to regret my visit. The spectacle of this small society macerating in its own abuses was not perhaps instructive, but I have found it exceedingly diverting.

The reigning Prince, Otto Johann Friedrich, a young man of imperfect education, questionable valor, and no scintilla of capacity, has fallen into entire public contempt. It was with difficulty that I obtained an interview, for he is frequently absent from a court where his presence is unheeded, and where his only *rôle* is to be a cloak for the amours of his wife. At last, however, on the third occasion when I visited the palace, I found this sovereign in the exercise of his inglorious function, with the wife on one hand and the lover on the other. He is not ill-looking; he has hair of a ruddy gold, which naturally curls, and his eyes are dark, a combination which I always regard as the mark of some congenital deficiency, physical or moral; his features are irregular but pleasing; the nose perhaps a little short, and the mouth a little womanish; his address is excellent, and he can express himself with point. But to pierce below these externals is to come on a vacuity of any sterling quality, a deliquescence of the moral nature, a frivolity and inconsequence of purpose that mark the nearly perfect fruit of a decadent age. He has a worthless smattering of many subjects, but a grasp of none. "I soon weary of a pursuit," he said to me, laughing; it would almost appear as if he took pride in his incapacity and lack of moral courage. The results of his dilettantism are to be seen in every field; he is a bad fencer, a second-rate horseman, dancer, shot; he sings—I have heard him—and he sings like a child; he writes intolerable verses in more than doubtful French; he acts like a common amateur; and in short there is no end to the number of the things that he does, and does badly. His one manly taste is for the chase. In sum, he is but a plexus of weaknesses; the singing chambermaid of the stage, tricked out in man's apparel and mounted on a circus horse. I have seen this poor phantom of a prince riding out alone or with a few huntsmen, disregarded by all, and I have been even grieved for the bearer of so futile and melancholy an existence. The last Merovingians may have looked not otherwise.

The Princess Amalia Seraphina, a daughter of the Grand-Ducal house of Toggenburg-Tannhäuser, would be equally inconsiderable if she were not a cutting instrument in the hands of an ambitious man. She is much younger than the Prince, a girl of two-and-twenty, sick with vanity, superficially clever, and fundamentally a fool. She has a red-brown rolling eye, too large for her face, and with sparks of both levity and ferocity; her forehead is high and narrow, her figure thin and a little stooping. Her manners, her conversation, which she interlards with French, her very tastes and ambitions, are alike assumed; and the assumption is ungracefully apparent: Hoyden playing Cleopatra. I should judge her to be incapable of truth. In private life a girl of this description embroils the peace of families, walks attended by a troop of scowling swains, and passes, once at least, through the divorce court; it is a common and, except to the cynic, an uninteresting type. On the throne, however, and in the hands of a man like Gondremark, she may become the authoress of serious public evils.

Gondremark, the true ruler of this unfortunate country, is a more complex study. His position in Grünewald, to which he is a foreigner, is eminently false; and that he should maintain it as he does, a very miracle of impudence and dexterity. His speech, his face, his policy, are all double: heads and tails. Which of the two extremes may be his actual design he were a bold man who should offer to decide. Yet I will hazard the guess that he follows both experimentally, and awaits, at the hand of destiny, one of those directing hints of which she is so lavish to the wise.

On the one hand, as Maire de Palais to the incompetent Otto, and using the love-sick Princess for a tool and mouthpiece, he pursues a policy of arbitrary power and territorial aggrandizement. He has called out the whole capable male population of the state to military service; he has bought cannon; he has tempted away promising officers from foreign armies; and he now begins, in his international relations, to assume the swaggering port and the vague threatful language of a bully. The idea of extending Grünewald may appear absurd, but the little state is advantageously placed, its neighbors are all defenseless; and if at any moment the jealousies of the greater courts should neutralize each other, an active policy might double the principality both in population and extent. Certainly at least the scheme is entertained in the court of Mittwalden; nor do I myself regard it as entirely desperate. The margravate of Brandenburgh has grown from as small beginnings to a formidable power; and though it is late in the day to try adventurous policies, and the age of war seems ended, Fortune, we must not forget, still blindly turns her wheel for men and nations. Concurrently with, and tributary to, these warlike preparations, crushing taxes have been levied, journals have been suppressed, and the country, which three years ago was prosperous and happy, now stagnates in a forced inaction, gold has become a curiosity, and the mills stand idle on the mountain streams.

On the other hand, in his second capacity of popular tribune, Gondremark is the incarnation of the free lodges, and sits at the center of an organized conspiracy against the state. To any such movement my sympathies were early acquired, and I would not willingly let fall a word that might embarrass or retard the revolution. But to show that I speak of knowledge, and not as the reporter of mere gossip, I may mention that I have myself been present at a meeting where the details of a republican Constitution were minutely debated and arranged; and I may add that Gondremark was throughout referred to by the speakers as their captain in action and the arbiter of their disputes. He has taught his dupes (for so I must regard them) that his power of resistance to the Princess is limited, and at each fresh stretch of authority persuades them, with specious reasons, to postpone the hour of insurrection. Thus (to give some instances of his astute diplomacy) he salved over the decree enforcing military service, under the plea that to be well drilled and exercised in arms was even a necessary preparation for revolt. And the other day, when it began to be rumored abroad that a war was being forced on a reluctant neighbor, the Grand Duke of Gerolstein, and I made sure it would be the signal for an instant rising, I was struck dumb with wonder to find that even this had been prepared and was to be accepted. I went from one to another in the Liberal camp, and all were in the same story, all had been drilled and schooled and fitted out with vacuous argument. "The lads had better see some real fighting," they said; "and besides, it will be as well to capture Gerolstein: we can then extend to our neighbors the blessing of liberty on the same day that we snatch it for ourselves; and the republic will be all the stronger to resist, if the kings of Europe should band themselves together to reduce it." I know not which of the two I should admire the more: the simplicity of the multitude or the audacity of the adventurer. But such are the subtleties, such the quibbling reasons, with which he blinds and leads this people. How long a course so tortuous can be pursued with safety I am incapable of guessing; not long, one would suppose; and yet this singular man has been treading the mazes for five years, and his favor at court and his popularity among the lodges still endure unbroken.

I have the privilege of slightly knowing him. Heavily and somewhat clumsily built, of a vast, disjointed, rambling frame, he can still pull himself together, and figure, not without admiration, in the saloon or the ballroom.

His hue and temperament are plentifully bilious; he has a saturnine eye; his cheek is of a dark blue where he has been shaven. Essentially he is to be numbered among the man-haters, a convinced contemner of his fellows. Yet he is himself of a commonplace ambition and greedy of applause. In talk, he is remarkable for a thirst of information, loving rather to hear than to communicate; for sound and studious views; and, judging by the extreme shortsightedness of common politicians, for a remarkable prevision of events. All this, however, without grace, pleasantry, or charm, heavily set forth, with a dull countenance. In our numerous conversations, although he has always heard me with deference, I have been conscious throughout of a sort of ponderous finessing hard to tolerate. He produces none of the effect of a gentleman; devoid not merely of pleasantry, but of all attention or communicative warmth of bearing. No gentleman, besides, would so parade his amours with the Princess; still less repay the Prince for his long-suffering with a studied insolence of demeanor and the fabrication of insulting nicknames, such as Prince Featherhead, which run from ear to ear and create a laugh throughout the country. Gondremark has thus some of the clumsier characters of the self-made man, combined with an inordinate, almost a besotted, pride of intellect and birth. Heavy, bilious, selfish, inornate, he sits upon this court and country like an incubus.

But it is probable that he preserves softer gifts for necessary purposes. Indeed, it is certain, although he vouchsafed none of it to me, that this cold and stolid politician possesses to a great degree the art of ingratiation, and can be all things to all men. Hence there has probably sprung up the idle legend that in private life he is a gross romping voluptuary. Nothing, at least, can well be more surprising than the terms of his connection with the Princess. Older than her husband, certainly uglier, and, according to the feeble ideas common among women, in every particular less pleasing, he has not only seized the complete command of all her thought and action, but has imposed on her in public a humiliating part. I do not here refer to the complete sacrifice of every rag of her reputation; for to many women these extremities are in themselves attractive. But there is about the court a certain lady of a disheveled reputation, a Countess von Rosen, wife or widow of a cloudy count, no longer in her second youth and already bereft of some of her attractions, who unequivocally occupies the station of the Baron's mistress. I had thought, at first, that she was but a hired accomplice, a mere blind or buffer for the more important sinner. A few hours' acquaintance with Madame von Rosen for ever dispelled the illusion. She is one rather to make than to prevent a scandal, and she values none of those bribes—money, honors, or employment—with which the situation might be gilded. Indeed, as a person frankly bad, she pleased me, in the court of Grünewald, like a piece of nature.

The power of this man over the Princess is, therefore, without bounds. She has sacrificed to the adoration with which he has inspired her not only her marriage vow and every shred of public decency, but that vice of jealousy which is so much dearer to the female sex than either intrinsic honor or outward consideration. Nay, more: a young, although not a very attractive woman, and a Princess both by birth and fact, she submits to the triumphant rivalry of one who might be her mother as to years, and who is so manifestly her inferior in station. This is one of the mysteries of the human heart. But the rage of illicit love, when it is once indulged, appears to grow by feeding; and to a person of the character and temperament of this unfortunate young lady, almost any depth of degradation is within the reach of possibility.

CHAPTER III

THE PRINCE AND THE ENGLISH TRAVELER

SO FAR Otto read, with waxing indignation; and here his fury overflowed. He tossed the roll upon the table and stood up. "This man," he said, "is a devil. A filthy imagination, an ear greedy of evil, a ponderous malignity of thought and language: I grow like him by the reading! Chancellor, where is this fellow lodged?"

"He was committed to the Flag Tower," replied Greisengesang, "in the Gamiani apartment."

"Lead me to him," said the Prince; and then a thought striking him, "Was it for that," he asked, "that I found so many sentries in the garden?"

"Your Highness, I am unaware," answered Greisengesang, true to his policy. "The disposition of the guards is a matter distinct from my functions."

Otto turned upon the old man fiercely, but ere he had time to speak, Gotthold touched him on the arm. He swallowed his wrath with a great effort. "It is well," he said, taking the roll. "Follow me to the Flag Tower."

The Chancellor gathered himself together, and the two set forward. It was a long and complicated voyage; for the library was in the wing of the new buildings, and the tower which carried the flag was in the old schloss upon the garden. By a great variety of stairs and corridors, they came out at last upon a patch of graveled court; the garden peeped through a high grating with a flash of green; tall, old, gabled buildings mounted on every side; the Flag Tower climbed, stage after stage, into the blue; and high over all, among the building daws, the yellow flag wavered in the wind. A sentinel at the foot of the tower stairs presented arms; another paced the first landing; and a third was stationed before the door of the extemporized prison.

"We guard this mud-bag like a jewel," Otto sneered.

The Gamiani apartment was so called from an Italian doctor who had imposed on the credulity of a former prince. The rooms were large, airy, pleasant, and looked upon the garden; but the walls were of great thickness (for the tower was old), and the windows were heavily barred. The Prince, followed by the Chancellor, still trotting to keep up with him, brushed swiftly through the little library and the long saloon, and burst like a thunderbolt into the bedroom at the further end. Sir John was finishing his toilet; a man of fifty, hard, uncompromising, able, with the eye and teeth of physical courage. He was unmoved by the irruption, and bowed with a sort of sneering ease.

"To what am I to attribute the honor of this visit?" he asked.

"You have eaten my bread," replied Otto, "you have taken my hand, you have been received under my roof. When did I fail you in courtesy? What have you asked that was not granted as to an honored guest? And here, sir," tapping fiercely on the manuscript, "here is your return."

"Your Highness has read my papers?" said the Baronet. "I am honored indeed. But the sketch is most imperfect. I shall now have much to add. I can say that the Prince, whom I had accused of idleness, is zealous in the department of police, taking upon himself those duties that are most distasteful. I shall be able to relate the burlesque incident of my arrest, and the singular interview with which you honor me at present. For the rest, I have already communicated with my Ambassador at Vienna; and unless you propose to murder me, I shall be at liberty, whether you please or not, within the week. For I hardly fancy the future empire of Grünewald is yet ripe to go to war with England. I conceive I am a little more than quits. I owe you no explanation; yours has been the wrong. You, if you have studied my writing with intelligence, owe me a large debt of gratitude. And to conclude, as I have not yet finished my toilet, I imagine the courtesy of a turnkey to a prisoner would induce you to withdraw."

There was some paper on the table, and Otto, sitting down, wrote a passport in the name of Sir John Crabtree.

"Affix the seal, Herr Cancellarius," he said, in his most princely manner, as he rose.

Greisengesang produced a red portfolio, and affixed the seal in the unpoetic guise of an adhesive stamp; nor did his perturbed and clumsy movements at all lessen the comedy of the performance. Sir John looked on with a malign enjoyment; and Otto chafed, regretting, when too late, the unnecessary royalty of his command and gesture. But at length the Chancellor had finished his piece of prestidigitation, and, without waiting for an order, had countersigned the passport. Thus regularized he returned it to Otto with a bow.

"You will now," said the Prince, "order one of my own carriages to be prepared; see it, with your own eyes, charged with Sir John's effects, and have it waiting within the hour behind the Pheasant House. Sir John departs this morning for Vienna."

The Chancellor took his elaborate departure.

"Here, sir, is your passport," said Otto, turning to the Baronet. "I regret it from my heart that you have met inhospitable usage."

"Well, there will be no English war," returned Sir John.

"Nay, sir," said Otto, "you surely owe me your civility. Matters are now changed, and we stand again upon the footing of two gentlemen. It was not I who ordered your arrest; I returned late last night from hunting; and as you can not blame me for your imprisonment, you may even thank me for your freedom."

"And yet you read my papers," said the traveler, shrewdly.

"There, sir, I was wrong," returned Otto; "and for that I ask your pardon. You can scarce refuse it, for your own dignity, to one who is a plexus of weaknesses. Nor was the fault entirely mine. Had the papers been innocent, it would have been at most an indiscretion. Your own guilt is the sting of my offense."

Sir John regarded Otto with an approving twinkle; then he bowed, but still in silence.

"Well, sir, as you are now at your entire disposal, I have a favor to beg of your indulgence," continued the Prince. "I have to request that you will walk with me alone into the garden so soon as your convenience permits."

"From the moment that I am a free man," Sir John replied, this time with perfect courtesy, "I am wholly at your Highness's command; and if you will excuse a rather summary toilet, I will even follow you as I am."

"I thank you, sir," said Otto.

So without more delay, the Prince leading, the pair proceeded down through the echoing stairway of the tower, and out through the grating, into the ample air and sunshine of the morning, and among the terraces and flower-beds of the garden. They crossed the fish-pond, where the carp were leaping as thick as bees; they mounted, one after another, the various flights of stairs, snowed upon, as they went, with April blossoms, and marching in time to the great orchestra of birds. Nor did Otto pause till they had reached the highest terrace of the garden. Here was a gate into the park, and hard by, under a tuft of laurel, a marble garden seat. Hence they looked down on the green tops of many elm-trees, where the rooks were busy; and, beyond that, upon the palace roof, and the yellow banner flying in the blue. "I pray you to be seated, sir," said Otto.

Sir John complied without a word; and for some seconds Otto walked to and fro before him, plunged in angry thought. The birds were all singing for a wager.

"Sir," said the Prince at length, turning toward the Englishman, "you are to me, except by the conventions of society, a perfect stranger. Of your character and wishes I am ignorant. I have never wittingly disobliged you. There is a difference in station, which I desire to waive. I would, if you still think me entitled to so much consideration—I would be regarded simply as a gentleman. Now, sir, I did wrong to glance at these papers, which I here return to you; but if curiosity be undignified, as I am free to own, falsehood is both cowardly and cruel. I opened your roll; and what did I find—what did I find about my wife? Lies!" he broke out. "They are lies! There are not, so help me God! four words of truth in your intolerable libel! You are a man; you are old, and might be the girl's father; you are a gentleman; you are a scholar, and have learned refinement; and you rake together all this vulgar scandal, and propose to print it in a public book! Such is your chivalry! But, thank God, sir, she has still a husband. You say, sir, in that paper in your hand, that I am a bad fencer; I have to request from you a lesson in the art. The park is close behind; yonder is the Pheasant House, where you will find your carriage; should I fall, you know, sir—you have written it in your paper—how little my movements are regarded; I am in the custom of disappearing; it will be one more disappearance; and long before it has awakened a remark, you may be safe across the border."

"You will observe," said Sir John, "that what you ask is impossible."

"And if I struck you?" cried the Prince, with a sudden menacing flash.

"It would be a cowardly blow," returned the Baronet, unmoved, "for it would make no change. I can not draw upon a reigning sovereign."

"And it is this man, to whom you dare not offer satisfaction, that you choose to insult!" cried Otto.

"Pardon me," said the traveler, "you are unjust. It is because you are a reigning sovereign that I can not fight with you; and it is for the same reason that I have a right to criticize your action and your wife. You are in everything a public creature; you belong to the public, body and bone. You have with you the law, the muskets of the army, and the eyes of spies. We, on our side, have but one weapon—truth."

"Truth!" echoed the Prince, with a gesture.

There was another silence.

"Your Highness," said Sir John at last, "you must not expect grapes from a thistle. I am old and a cynic. Nobody cares a rush for me; and on the whole, after the present interview, I scarce know anybody that I like better than yourself. You see, I have changed my mind, and have the uncommon virtue to avow the change. I tear up this stuff before you, here in your own garden; I ask your pardon, I ask the pardon of the Princess; and I give you my word of honor as a gentleman and an old man, that when my book of travels shall appear it shall not contain so much as the name of Grünewald. And yet it was a racy chapter! But had your Highness only read about the other courts! I am a carrion crow; but it is not my fault, after all, that the world is such a nauseous kennel."

"Sir," said Otto, "is the eye not jaundiced?"

"Nay," cried the traveler, "very likely. I am one who goes sniffing; I am no poet. I believe in a better future for the world; or, at all accounts, I do most potently disbelieve in the present. Rotten eggs is the burden of my song. But indeed, your Highness, when I meet with any merit, I do not think that I am slow to recognize it. This is a day that I shall still recall with gratitude, for I have found a sovereign with some manly virtues; and for once —old courtier and old radical as I am—it is from the heart and quite sincerely that I can request the honor of kissing your Highness's hand?"

"Nay, sir," said Otto, "to my heart!"

And the Englishman, taken at unawares, was clasped for a moment in the Prince's arms.

"And now, sir," added Otto, "there is the Pheasant House; close behind it you will find my carriage, which I pray you to accept. God speed you to Vienna!"

"In the impetuosity of youth," replied Sir John, "your Highness has overlooked one circumstance. I am still fasting."

"Well, sir," said Otto, smiling, "you are your own master; you may go or stay. But I warn you, your friend may prove less powerful than your enemies. The Prince, indeed, is thoroughly on your side; he has all the will to help; but to whom do I speak?—you know better than I do, he is not alone in Grünewald."

"There is a deal in position," returned the traveler, gravely nodding. "Gondremark loves to temporize; his policy is below ground, and he fears all open courses; and now that I have seen you act with so much spirit, I will cheerfully risk myself on your protection. Who knows? You may be yet the better man."

"Do you indeed believe so?" cried the Prince. "You put life into my heart!"

"I will give up sketching portraits," said the Baronet. "I am a blind owl; I had misread you strangely. And yet remember this; a sprint is one thing, and to run all day another. For I still mistrust your constitution; the short nose, the hair and eyes of several complexions; no, they are diagnostic; and I must end, I see, as I began."

"I am still a singing chambermaid?" said Otto.

"Nay, your Highness, I pray you to forget what I had written," said Sir John; "I am not like Pilate; and the chapter is no more. Bury it, if you love me."

CHAPTER IV

WHILE THE PRINCE IS IN THE ANTEROOM

GREATLY comforted by the exploits of the morning, the Prince turned toward the Princess's anteroom, bent on a more difficult enterprise. The curtains rose before him, the usher called his name, and he entered the room with an exaggeration of his usual mincing and airy dignity. There were about a score of persons waiting, principally ladies; it was one of the few societies in Grünewald where Otto knew himself to be popular; and while a maid of honor made her exit by a side door to announce his arrival to the Princess, he moved round the apartment, collecting homage and bestowing compliments, with friendly grace. Had this been the sum of his duties, he had been an admirable monarch. Lady after lady was impartially honored by his attention.

"Madam," he said to one, "how does this happen? I find you daily more adorable."

"And your Highness daily browner," replied the lady. "We began equal; oh, there I will be bold: we have both beautiful complexions. But while I study mine, your Highness tans himself."

"A perfect negro, madam; and what so fitly—being beauty's slave?" said Otto. "Madame Grafinski, when is our next play? I have just heard that I am a bad actor."

"O ciel!" cried Madame Grafinski. "Who could venture? What a bear!"

"An excellent man, I can assure you," returned Otto.

"Oh, never! Oh, is it possible!" fluted the lady. "Your Highness plays like an angel."

"You must be right, madam; who could speak falsely and yet look so charming?" said the Prince. "But this gentleman, it seems, would have preferred me playing like an actor."

A sort of hum, a falsetto, feminine cooing, greeted the tiny sally; and Otto expanded like a peacock. This warm atmosphere of women and flattery and idle chatter pleased him to the marrow.

"Madame von Eisenthal, your coiffure is delicious," he remarked.

"Every one was saying so," said one.

"If I have pleased Prince Charming?" And Madame von Eisenthal swept him a deep courtesy with a killing glance of adoration.

"It is new?" he asked. "Vienna fashion."

"Mint new," replied the lady, "for your Highness's return. I felt young this morning; it was a premonition. But why, Prince, do you ever leave us?"

"For the pleasure of the return," said Otto. "I am like a dog; I must bury my bone, and then come back to gloat upon it."

"Oh, a bone! Fie, what a comparison! You have brought back the manners of the wood," returned the lady.

"Madam, it is what the dog holds dearest," said the Prince. "But I observe Madame von Rosen."

And Otto, leaving the group to which he had been piping, stepped toward the embrasure of a window where a lady stood.

The Countess von Rosen had hitherto been silent, and a thought depressed, but on the approach of Otto she began to brighten. She was tall, slim as a nymph, and of a very airy carriage; and her face, which was already beautiful in repose, lightened and changed, flashed into smiles, and glowed with lovely color at the touch of animation. She was a good vocalist; and, even in speech, her voice commanded a great range of changes, the low notes rich with tenor quality, the upper ringing, on the brink of laughter, into music. A gem of many facets and variable hues of fire; a woman who withheld the better portion of her beauty, and then, in a caressing second, flashed it like a weapon full on the beholder; now merely a tall figure and a sallow handsome face, with the evidences of a reckless temper; anon opening like a flower to life and color, mirth and tenderness:—Madame von Rosen had always a dagger in reserve for the despatch of ill-assured admirers. She met Otto with the dart of tender gaiety.

"You have come to me at last, Prince Cruel," she said. "Butterfly! Well, and am I not to kiss your hand?" she added.

"Madam, it is I who must kiss yours." And Otto bowed and kissed it.

"You deny me every indulgence," she said, smiling.

"And now what news in Court?" inquired the Prince. "I come to you for my gazette."

"Ditch-water!" she replied. "The world is all asleep, grown gray in slumber; I do not remember any waking movement since quite an eternity; and the last thing in the nature of a sensation was the last time my governess was allowed to box my ears. But yet I do myself and your unfortunate enchanted palace some injustice. Here is the last—Oh, positively!" And she told him the story from behind her fan, with many glances, many cunning strokes of the narrator's art. The others had drawn away, for it was understood that Madame von Rosen was in favor with the Prince. None the less, however, did the Countess lower her voice at times to within a semitone of whispering; and the pair leaned together over the narrative.

"Do you know," said Otto, laughing, "you are the only entertaining woman on this earth!"

"Oh, you have found out so much," she cried.

"Yes, madam, I grow wiser with advancing years," he returned.

"Years!" she repeated. "Do you name the traitors? I do not believe in years; the calendar is a delusion."

"You must be right, madam," replied the Prince. "For six years that we have been good friends, I have observed you to grow younger."

"Flatterer!" cried she, and then with a change, "But why should I say so," she added, "when I protest I think the same? A week ago I had a council with my Father Director, the glass; and the glass replied, 'Not yet!' I confess my face in this way once a month. Oh! a very solemn moment. Do you know what I shall do when the mirror answers, 'Now'?"

"I can not guess," said he.

"No more can I," returned the Countess. "There is such a choice! Suicide, gambling, a nunnery, a volume of memoirs, or politics—the last, I am afraid."

"It is a dull trade," said Otto.

"Nay," she replied, "it is a trade I rather like. It is, after all, first cousin to gossip, which no one can deny to be amusing. For instance, if I were to tell you that the Princess and the Baron rode out together daily to inspect the cannon, it is either a piece of politics or scandal, as I turn my phrase. I am the alchemist that makes the transmutation. They have been everywhere together since you left," she continued, brightening as she saw Otto darken; that is a poor snippet of malicious gossip—and they were everywhere cheered—and with that addition all becomes political intelligence."

"Let us change the subject," said Otto.

"I was about to propose it," she replied, "or rather to pursue the politics. Do you know? this war is popular—popular to the length of cheering Princess Seraphina."

"All things, madam, are possible," said the Prince; "and this among others, that we may be going into war, but I give you my word of honor I do not know with whom."

"And you put up with it?" she cried. "I have no pretensions to morality; and I confess I have always abominated the lamb, and nourished a romantic feeling for the wolf. Oh, be done with lambiness! Let us see there is a prince, for I am weary of the distaff."

"Madam," said Otto, "I thought you were of that faction."

"I should be of yours, *mon Prince,* if you had one," she retorted. "Is it true that you have no ambition? There was a man once in England whom they called the king-maker. Do you know," she added, "I fancy I could make a prince?"

"Some day, madam," said Otto, "I may ask you to help make a farmer."

"Is that a riddle?" asked the Countess.

"It is," replied the Prince, "and a very good one too."

"Tit for tat. I will ask you another," she returned. "Where is Gondremark?"

"The Prime Minister? In the prime-ministry, no doubt," said Otto.

"Precisely," said the Countess; and she pointed with her fan to the door of the Princess's apartments. "You and I, *mon Prince,* are in the anteroom. You think me unkind," she added. "Try me and you will see. Set me a task, put me a question; there is no enormity I am not capable of doing to oblige you, and no secret that I am not ready to betray."

"Nay, madam, but I respect my friend too much," he answered, kissing her hand. "I would rather remain ignorant of all. We fraternize like foemen soldiers at the outposts, but let each be true to his own army."

"Ah," she cried, "if all men were generous like you, it would be worth while to be a woman!" Yet, judging by her looks, his generosity, if anything, had disappointed her; she seemed to seek a remedy, and, having found it, brightened once more. "And now," she said, "may I dismiss my sovereign? This is rebellion and a *cas pendable;* but what am I to do? My bear is jealous!"

"Madam, enough!" cried Otto. "Ahasuerus reaches you the scepter; more, he will obey you in all points. I should have been a dog to come to whistling."

And so the Prince departed, and fluttered round Grafinski and von Eisenthal. But the Countess knew the use of her offensive weapons, and had left a pleasant arrow in the Prince's heart. That Gondremark was jealous—here was an agreeable revenge! And Madame von Rosen, as the occasion of the jealousy, appeared to him in a new light.

CHAPTER V

GONDREMARK IS IN MY LADY'S CHAMBER

THE Countess von Rosen spoke the truth. The great Prime Minister of Grünewald was already closeted with Seraphina. The toilet was over; and the Princess, tastefully arrayed, sat face to face with a tall mirror. Sir John's description was unkindly true, true in terms and yet a libel, a misogynistic masterpiece. Her forehead was perhaps too high, but it became her; her figure somewhat stooped, but every detail was formed and finished like a gem; her hand, her foot, her ear, the set of her comely head, were all dainty and accordant; if she was not beautiful, she was vivid, changeful, colored, and pretty with a thousand various prettinesses; and her eyes, if they indeed rolled too consciously, yet rolled to purpose. They were her most attractive feature, yet they continually bore eloquent false witness to her thoughts; for while she herself, in the depths of her immature, unsoftened heart, was given altogether to manlike inviting, fiery, melting, and artful, like the eyes of a rapacious ambition and the desire of power, the eyes were by turns bold, siren. And artful, in a sense, she was. Chafing that she was not a man and could not shine by action, she had conceived a woman's part, of answerable domination; she sought to subjugate for by-ends, to rain influence and be fancy free; and while she loved not man, loved to see man obey her. It is a common girl's ambition. Such was perhaps that lady of the glove, who sent her lover to the lions. But the snare is laid alike for male and female, and the world most artfully contrived.

Near her, in a low chair, Gondremark had arranged his limbs into a cat-like attitude, high-shouldered, stooping, and submiss. The formidable blue jowl of the man, and the dull bilious eye, set perhaps a higher value on his evident desire to please. His face was marked by capacity, temper, and a kind of bold, piratical dishonesty which it would be calumnious to call deceit. His manners, as he smiled upon the Princess, were overfine, yet hardly elegant.

"Possibly," said the Baron," I should now proceed to take my leave. I must not keep my sovereign in the anteroom. Let us come at once to a decision."

"It can not, can not be put off?" she asked.

"It is impossible," answered Gondremark. "Your Highness sees it for herself. In the earlier stages, we might imitate the serpent; but for the ultimatum, there is no choice but to be bold like lions. Had the Prince chosen to remain away, it had been better; but we have gone too far forward to delay."

"What can have brought him?" she cried. "To-day of all days?"

"The marplot, madam, has the instinct of his nature," returned Gondremark. "But you exaggerate the peril. Think, madam, how far we have prospered, and against what odds! Shall a Featherhead?—but no!" And he blew upon his fingers lightly with a laugh.

"Featherhead," she replied, "is still the Prince of Grünewald."

"On your sufferance only, and so long as you shall please to be indulgent," said the Baron. "There are rights of nature; power to the powerful is the law. If he shall think to cross your destiny—well, you have heard of the brazen and the earthen pot."

"Do you call me pot? You are ungallant, Baron," laughed the Princess.

"Before we are done with your glory, I shall have called you by many different titles," he replied.

The girl flushed with pleasure. "But Frédéric is still the Prince, *Monsieur le Flatteur,"* she said. "You do not propose a revolution?—you of all men?"

"Dear madam, when it is already made!" he cried. "The Prince reigns indeed in the almanac; but my Princess reigns and rules." And he looked at her with a fond admiration that made the heart of Seraphina swell. Looking on her huge slave, she drank the intoxicating joys of power. Meanwhile he continued, with that sort of massive archness that so ill became him, "She has but one fault; there is but one danger in the great career that I foresee for her. May I name it? may I be so irreverent? It is in herself—her heart is soft."

"Her courage is faint, Baron," said the Princess. "Suppose we have judged ill, suppose we were defeated?"

"Defeated, madam?" returned the Baron, with a touch of ill-humor. "Is the dog defeated by the hare? Our troops are all cantoned along the frontier; in five hours the vanguard of five thousand bayonets shall be hammering on the gates of Brandenau; and in all Gerolstein there are not fifteen hundred men who can maneuver. It is as simple as a sum. There can be no resistance."

"It is no great exploit," she said. "Is that what you call glory? It is like beating a child."

"The courage, madam, is diplomatic," he replied. "We take a grave step; we fix the eyes of Europe, for the first time, on Grünewald; and in the negotiations of the next three months, mark me, we stand or fall. It is there, madam, that I shall have to depend upon your counsels," he added, almost gloomily. "If I had not seen you at work, if I did not know the fertility of your mind, I own I should tremble for the consequence. But it is in this field that men must recognize their inability. All the great negotiators, when they have not been women, have had women at their elbows. Madame de Pompadour was ill served; she had not found her Gondremark; but what a mighty politician! Catherine de Medici, too, what justice of sight, what readiness of means, what elasticity against defeat! But alas! madam, her Featherheads were her own children; and she had that one touch of vulgarity, that one trait of the good wife, that she suffered family ties and affections to confine her liberty."

These singular views of history, strictly *ad usum Seraphinæ,* did not weave their usual soothing spell over the Princess. It was plain that she had taken a momentary distaste to her own resolutions; for she continued to oppose her counselor, looking upon him out of half-closed eyes and with the shadow of a sneer upon her lips. "What boys men are!" she said; "what lovers of big words! Courage, indeed! If you had to scour pans, Herr von Gondremark, you would call it, I suppose, Domestic Courage?"

"I would, madam," said the Baron, stoutly, "if I scoured them well. I would put a good name upon a virtue; you will not overdo it; they are not so enchanting in themselves."

"Well, but let me see," she said. "I wish to understand your courage. Why we asked leave, like children! Our granny in Berlin, our uncle in Vienna, the whole family, have patted us on the head and sent us forward. Courage? I wonder when I hear you!"

"My Princess is unlike herself," returned the Baron. "She has forgotten where the peril lies. True, we have received encouragement on every hand; but my Princess knows too well on what untenable conditions; and she knows besides how, in the publicity of the diet, these whispered conferences are forgotten and disowned. The danger is very real"—he raged inwardly at having to blow the very coal he had been quenching—"none the less real in that it is not precisely military, but for that reason the easier to be faced. Had we to count upon your troops, although I share your Highness's expectations of the conduct of Alvenau, we can not forget that he has not been proved in chief command. But where negotiation is concerned, the conduct lies with us; and with your help, I laugh at danger."

"It may be so," said Seraphina, sighing. "It is elsewhere that I see danger. The people, these abominable people—suppose they should instantly rebel? What a figure we should make in the eyes of Europe to have undertaken an invasion while my own throne was tottering to its fall!"

"Nay, madam," said Gondremark, smiling, "here you are beneath yourself. What is it that feeds their discontent? What but the taxes? Once we have seized Gerolstein, the taxes are remitted, the sons return covered with renown, the houses are adorned with pillage, each tastes his little share of military glory, and behold us once again a happy family! 'Ay,' they will say, in each other's long ears, 'the Princess knew what she was about; she was in the right of it; she has a head upon her shoulders; and here we are, you see, better off than before.' But why should I say all this? It is what my Princess pointed out to me herself; it was by these reasons that she converted me to this adventure."

"I think, Herr von Gondremark," said Seraphina, somewhat tartly, "you often attribute your own sagacity to your Princess."

For a second Gondremark staggered under the shrewdness of the attack; the next, he had perfectly recovered. "Do I?" he said. "It is very possible. I have observed a similar tendency in your Highness."

It was so openly spoken, and appeared so just, that Seraphina breathed again. Her vanity had been alarmed, and the greatness of the relief improved her spirits. "Well," she said, "all this is little to the purpose. We are keeping Frédéric without, and I am still ignorant of our line of battle. Come, co-admiral, let us consult. . . . How am I to receive him now? And what are we to do if he should appear at the council?"

"Now," he answered, "I shall leave him to my Princess for just now! I have seen her at work. Send him off to his theatricals! But in all gentleness," he added. "Would it, for instance, would it displease my sovereign to affect a headache?"

"Never!" said she. "The woman who can manage, like the man who can fight, must never shrink from an encounter. The knight must not disgrace his weapon."

"Then let me pray my *belle dame sans merci,*" he returned, "to affect the only virtue that she lacks. Be pitiful to the poor young man; affect an interest in his hunting; be weary of politics; find in his society, as it were, a grateful repose from dry considerations. Does my Princess authorize the line of battle?"

"Well, that is a trifle," answered Seraphina. "The council—there is the point."

"The council?" cried Gondremark. "Permit me, madam." And he rose and proceeded to flutter about the room, counterfeiting Otto both in voice and gesture not unhappily. "'What is there to-day, Herr von Gondremark? Ah, Herr Cancellarius, a new wig! You can not deceive me; I know every wig in Grünewald; I have the sovereign's eye. What are these papers about? Oh, I see. Oh, certainly. Surely, surely. I wager none of you remarked that wig. By all means. I know nothing about that. Dear me, are there as many as all that? Well, you can sign them; you have the procuration. You see, Herr Cancellarius, I knew your wig,' And so," concluded Gondremark, resuming his own voice, "our sovereign, by the particular grace of God, enlightens and supports his privy councilors."

But when the Baron turned to Seraphina for approval, he found her frozen. "You are pleased to be witty, Herr von Gondremark," she said, "and have perhaps forgotten where you are. But these rehearsals are apt to be misleading. Your master, the Prince of Grünewald, is sometimes more exacting."

Gondremark cursed her in his soul. Of all injured vanities, that of the reproved buffoon is the most savage; and when grave issues are involved, these petty stabs become unbearable. But Gondremark was a man of iron; he showed nothing; he did not even, like the common trickster, retreat because he had presumed, but held to his point bravely. "Madam," he said, "if, as you say, he prove exacting, we must take the bull by the horns."

"We shall see," she said, and she arranged her skirt like one about to rise. Temper, scorn, disgust, all the more acrid feelings, became her like jewels; and she now looked her best.

"Pray God they quarrel," thought Gondremark. "The damned minx may fail me yet, unless they quarrel. It is time to let him in. Zz—fight dogs!" Consequent on these reflections, he bent a stiff knee and chivalrously kissed the Princess's hand. "My Princess," he said, "must now dismiss her servant. I have much to arrange against the hour of council."

"Go," she said, and rose.

And as Gondremark tripped out of a private door, she touched a bell, and gave the order to admit the Prince.

CHAPTER VI

THE PRINCE DELIVERS A LECTURE ON MARRIAGE, WITH PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF DIVORCE

WITH what a world of excellent intentions Otto entered his wife's cabinet! how fatherly, how tender! how morally affecting were the words he had prepared! Nor was Seraphina unamiably inclined. Her usual fear of Otto as a marplot in her great designs was now swallowed up in a passing distrust of the designs themselves. For Gondremark, besides, she had conceived an angry horror. In her heart she did not like the Baron. Behind his impudent servility, behind the devotion which, with indelicate delicacy, he still forced on her attention, she divined the grossness of his nature. So a man may be proud of having tamed a bear, and yet sicken at his captive's odor. And above all, she had certain jealous intimations that the man was false, and the deception double. True, she falsely trifled with his love; but he, perhaps, was only trifling with her vanity. The insolence of his late mimicry, and the odium of her own position as she sat and watched it, lay besides like a load upon her conscience. She met Otto almost with a sense of guilt, and yet she welcomed him as a deliverer from ugly things.

But the wheels of an interview are at the mercy of a thousand ruts; and even at Otto's entrance, the first jolt occurred. Gondremark, he saw, was gone; but there was the chair drawn close for consultation; and it pained him not only that this man had been received, but that he should depart with such an air of secrecy. Struggling with this twinge, it was somewhat sharply that he dismissed the attendant who had brought him in.

"You make yourself at home, *chez moi,*" she said, a little ruffled both by his tone of command and by the glance he had thrown upon the chair.

"Madam," replied Otto, "I am here so seldom that I have almost the rights of a stranger."

"You choose your own associates, Frédéric," she said.

"I am here to speak of it," he returned. "It is now four years since we mere married; and these four years, Seraphina, have not perhaps been happy either for you or for me. I am well aware I was unsuitable to be your husband. I was not young, I had no ambition. I was a trifler; and you despised me, I dare not say unjustly. But to do justice on both sides, you must bear in mind how I have acted. When I found it amused you to play the part of Princess on this little stage, did I not immediately resign to you my box of toys, this Grünewald? And when I found I was distasteful as a husband, could any husband have been less intrusive? You will tell me that I have no feelings, no preference, and thus no credit; that I go before the wind; that all this was in my character. And indeed, one thing is true, that it is easy, too easy, to leave things undone. But Seraphina, I begin to learn it is not always wise. If I were too old and too uncongenial for your husband, I should still have remembered that I was the Prince of that country to which you came, a visitor and a child. In that relation also there were duties, and these duties I have not performed."

To claim the advantage of superior age is to give sure offense.

"Duty!" laughed Seraphina, "and on your lips, Frédéric! You make me laugh. What fancy is this? Go, flirt with the maids and be a prince in Dresden China, as you look. Enjoy yourself, *mon enfant,* and leave duty and the state to us."

The plural grated on the Prince. "I have enjoyed myself too much," he said, "since enjoyment is the word. And yet there were much to say upon the other side. You must suppose me desperately fond of hunting. But indeed there were days when I found a great deal of interest in what it was courtesy to call my government. And I have always had some claim to taste; and I could tell live happiness from dull routine; and between hunting, and the throne of Austria, and your society, my choice had never wavered, had the choice been mine. You were a girl, a bud, when you were given me—"

"Heavens!" she cried, "is this to be a love scene?"

"I am never ridiculous," he said; "it is my only merit; and you may be certain this shall be a scene of marriage *à la mode*. But when I remember the beginning, it is bare courtesy to speak in sorrow. Be just, madam: you would think me strangely uncivil to recall these days without the decency of a regret. Be yet a little juster, and own, if only in complaisance, that you yourself regret that past."

"I have nothing to regret," said the Princess. "You surprise me. I thought you were so happy."

"Happy and happy, there are so many hundred ways," said Otto. "A man may be happy in revolt; he may be happy in sleep; wine, change, and travel make him happy; virtue, they say, will do the like—I have not tried; and they say also that in old, quiet, and habitual marriages there is yet another happiness. Happy, yes; I am happy if you like; but I will tell you frankly, I was happier when I brought you home."

"Well," said the Princess, not without constraint, "it seems you changed your mind."

"Not I," returned Otto, "I never changed. Do you remember, Seraphina, on our way home, when you saw the roses in the lane, and I got out and plucked them? It was a narrow lane between great trees; the sunset at the end was all gold, and the rooks were flying overhead. There were nine, nine red roses; you gave me a kiss for each, and I told myself that every rose and every kiss should stand for a year of love. Well, in eighteen months there was an end. But do you fancy, Seraphina, that my heart has altered?"

"I am sure I can not tell," she said, like an automaton.

"It has not," the Prince continued. "There is nothing ridiculous, even from a husband, in a love that owns itself unhappy and that asks no more. I built on sand; pardon me, I do not breathe a reproach—I built, I suppose, upon my own infirmities; but I put my heart in the building, and it still lies among the ruins."

"How very poetical!" she said with a little choking laugh, unknown relentings, unfamiliar softnesses, moving within her. "What would you be at?" she added, hardening her voice.

"I would be at this," he answered; "and hard it is to say. I would be at this:—Seraphina, I am your husband after all, and a poor fool that loves you. Understand," he cried almost fiercely, "I am no suppliant husband; what your love refuses I would scorn to receive from your pity. I do not ask, I would not take it. And for jealousy, what ground have I? A dog-in-the-manger jealousy is a thing the dogs may laugh at. But at least, in the world's eye, I am still your husband; and I ask you if you treat me fairly? I keep to myself, I leave you free, I have given you in everything your will. What do you in return? I find, Seraphina, that you have been too thoughtless. But between persons such as we, in our conspicuous station, particular care and a particular courtesy are owing. Scandal is perhaps not easy to avoid; but it is hard to bear."

"Scandal!" she cried, with a deep breath. "Scandal! It is for this you have been driving!"

"I have tried to tell you how I feel," he replied. "I have told you that I love you—love you in vain—a bitter thing for a husband; I have laid myself open that I might speak without offense. And now that I have begun, I will go on and finish."

"I demand it," she said. "What is this about?"

Otto flushed crimson. "I have to say what I would fain not," he answered. "I counsel you to see less of Gondremark."

"Of Gondremark? And why?" she asked.

"Your intimacy is the ground of scandal, madam," said Otto, firmly enough—"of a scandal that is agony to me, and would be crushing to your parents if they knew it."

"You are the first to bring me word of it," she said. "I thank you."

"You have perhaps cause," he replied. "Perhaps I am the only one among your friends—"

"Oh, leave my friends alone," she interrupted. "My friends are of a different stamp. You have come to me here and made a parade of sentiment. When have I last seen you? I have governed your kingdom for you in the mean while, and there I got no help. At last, when I am weary with a man's work, and you are weary of your playthings, you return to make me a scene of conjugal reproaches—the grocer and his wife! The positions are too much reversed; and you should understand, at least, that I can not at the same time do your work of government and behave myself like a little girl. Scandal is the atmosphere in which we live, we princes; it is what a prince should know. You play an odious part. Do you believe this rumor?"

"Madam, should I be here?" said Otto.

"It is what I want to know!" she cried, the tempest of her scorn increasing. "Suppose you did—I say, suppose you did believe it?"

"I should make it my business to suppose the contrary," he answered.

"I thought so. Oh, you are made of baseness!" said she.

"Madam," he cried, roused at last, "enough of this. You wilfully misunderstand my attitude; you outwear my patience. In the name of your parents, in my own name, I summon you to be more circumspect."

"Is this a request, *Monsieur mon mari?*" she demanded.

"Madam, if I chose, I might command," said Otto.

"You might, sir, as the law stands, make me a prisoner," returned Seraphina. "Short of that you will gain nothing."

"You will continue as before?" he asked.

"Precisely as before," said she. "As soon as this comedy is over, I shall request the Freiherr von Gondremark to visit me. Do you understand?" she added, rising. "For my part, I have done."

"I will then ask the favor of your hand, madam," said Otto, palpitating in every pulse with anger. "I have to request that you will visit in my society another part of my poor house. And reassure yourself—it will not take long—and it is the last obligation that you shall have the chance to lav me under."

"The last?" she cried. "Most joyfully!"

She offered her hand and he took it; on each side with an elaborate affectation, each inwardly incandescent. He led her out by the private door, following where Gondremark had passed; they threaded a corridor or two, little frequented, looking on a court, until they came at last into the Prince's suite. The first room was an armory, hung all about with the weapons of various countries, and looking forth on the front terrace.

"Have you brought me here to slay me?" she inquired.

"I have brought you, madam, only to pass on," replied Otto.

Next they came to a library, where an old chamberlain sat half asleep. He rose and bowed before the princely couple, asking for orders.

"You will attend us here," said Otto.

The next stage was a gallery of pictures, where Seraphina's portrait hung conspicuous, dressed for the chase, red roses in her hair, as Otto, in the first months of marriage, had directed. He pointed to it without a word; she raised her eyebrows in silence; and they passed still forward into a matted corridor where four doors opened. One led to Otto's bedroom; one was the private door to Seraphina's. And here, for the first time, Otto left her hand, and stepping forward, shot the bolt.

"It is long, madam," said he, "since it was bolted on the other side."

"One was effectual," returned the Princess. "Is this all?"

"Shall I reconduct you?" he asked, bowing.

"I should prefer," she said, in ringing tones, "the conduct of the Freiherr von Gondremark."

Otto summoned the chamberlain. "If the Freiherr von Gondremark is in the palace," he said, "bid him attend the Princess here." And when the official had departed, "Can I do more to serve you, madam?" the Prince asked.

"Thank you, no. I have been much amused," she answered.

"I have now," continued Otto, "given you your liberty complete. This has been for you a miserable marriage."

"Miserable!" said she.

"It has been made light to you; it shall be lighter still," continued the Prince. "But one thing, madam, you must still continue to bear—my father's name, which is now yours. I leave it in your hands. Let me see you, since you will have no advice of mine, apply the more attention of your own to bear it worthily."

"Herr von Gondremark is long in coming," she remarked.

"Oh, Seraphina, Seraphina!" he cried. And that was the end of their interview.

She tripped to a window and looked out; and a little after, the chamberlain announced the Freiherr von Gondremark, who entered with something of a wild eye and changed complexion, confounded, as he was, at this unusual summons. The Princess faced round from the window with a pearly smile; nothing but her heightened color spoke of discomposure. Otto was pale, but he was otherwise master of himself.

"Herr von Gondremark," said he, "oblige me so far: reconduct the Princess to her own apartment."

The Baron, still all at sea, offered his hand, which was smilingly accepted, and the pair sailed forth through the picture-gallery.

As soon as they were gone, and Otto knew the length and breadth of his miscarriage, and how he had done the contrary of all that he intended, he stood stupefied. A fiasco so complete and sweeping was laughable, even to himself; and he laughed aloud in his wrath. Upon this mood there followed the sharpest violence of remorse; and to that again, as he recalled his provocation, anger succeeded afresh. So he was tossed in spirit; now bewailing his inconsequence and lack of temper, now flaming up in white-hot indignation and a noble pity for himself.

He paced his apartment like a leopard. There was danger in Otto, for a flash. Like a pistol, he could kill at one moment, and the next he might be kicked aside. But just then, as he walked the long floors in his alternate humors, tearing his handkerchief between his hands, he was strung to his top note, every nerve attent. The pistol, you might say, was charged. And when jealousy from time to time fetched him a lash across the tenderest of his feeling, and sent a string of her fire-pictures glancing before his mind's eye, the contraction of his face was even dangerous. He disregarded jealousy's inventions, yet they stung. In this height of his anger, he still preserved his faith in Seraphina's innocence; but the thought of her possible misconduct was the bitterest ingredient in his pot of sorrow.

There came a knock at the door, and the chamberlain brought him a note. He took it and ground it in his hand, continuing his march, continuing his bewildered thoughts; and some minutes had gone by before the circumstance came clearly to his mind. Then he paused and opened it. It was a pencil scratch from Gotthold, thus conceived:

> "The council is privately summoned at once.
> "G. v. H."

If the council was thus called before the hour, and that privately, it was plain they feared his interference. Feared: here was a sweet thought. Gotthold, too—Gotthold, who had always used and regarded him as a mere pleasant lad, had now been at the pains to warn him; Gotthold looked for something at his hands. Well, none should be disappointed; the Prince, too long beshadowed by the uxorious lover, should now return and shine. He summoned his valet, repaired the disorder of his appearance with elaborate care; and then, curled and scented and adorned, Prince Charming in every line, but with a twitching nostril, he set forth unattended for the council.

CHAPTER VII

THE PRINCE DISSOLVES THE COUNCIL

IT WAS as Gotthold wrote. The liberation of Sir John, Greisengesang's uneasy narrative, last of all, the scene between Seraphina and the Prince, had decided the conspirators to take a step of bold timidity. There had been a period of bustle, liveried messengers speeding here and there with notes; and at half-past ten in the morning, about an hour before its usual hour, the council of Grünewald sat around the board.

It was not a large body. At the instance of Gondremark, it had undergone a strict purgation, and was now composed exclusively of tools. Three secretaries sat at a side table. Seraphina took the head; on her right was the Baron, on her left Greisengesang; below these Grafinski the treasurer, Count Eisenthal, a couple of non-combatants, and, to the surprise of all, Gotthold. He had been named a privy councilor by Otto, merely that he might profit by the salary; and as he was never known to attend a meeting, it had occurred to nobody to cancel his appointment. His present appearance was the more ominous, coming when it did. Gondremark scowled upon him; and the non-combatant on his right, intercepting this black look, edged away from one who was so clearly out of favor.

"The hour presses, your Highness," said the Baron; "may we proceed to business?"

"At once," replied Seraphina.

"Your Highness will pardon me," said Gotthold; "but you are still, perhaps, unacquainted with the fact that Prince Otto has returned."

"The Prince will not attend the council," replied Seraphina, with a momentary blush. "The despatches, Herr Cancellarius? There is one for Gerolstein?"

A secretary brought a paper.

"Here, madam," said Greisengesang. "Shall I read it?"

"We are all familiar with its terms," replied Gondremark. "Your Highness approves?"

"Unhesitatingly," said Seraphina.

"It may then be held as read," concluded the Baron. "Will your Highness sign?"

The Princess did so; Gondremark, Eisenthal, and one of the non-combatants followed suit; and the paper was then passed across the table to the librarian. He proceeded leisurely to read.

"We have no time to spare, Herr Doctor," cried the Baron, brutally. "If you do not choose to sign on the authority of your sovereign, pass it on. Or you may leave the table," he added, his temper ripping out.

"I decline your invitation, Herr von Gondremark; and my sovereign, as I continue to observe with regret, is still absent from the board," replied the Doctor, calmly; and he resumed the perusal of the paper, the rest chafing and exchanging glances. "Madam and gentlemen," he said, at last, "what I hold in my hand is simply a declaration of war."

"Simply," said Seraphina, flashing defiance.

"The sovereign of this country is under the same roof with us," continued Gotthold, "and I insist he shall be summoned. It is needless to adduce my reasons; you are all ashamed at heart of this projected treachery."

The council waved like a sea. There were various outcries.

"You insult the Princess," thundered Gondremark.

"I maintain my protest," replied Gotthold.

At the height of this confusion the door was thrown open; an usher announced, "Gentlemen, the Prince!" and Otto, with his most excellent bearing, entered the apartment. It was like oil upon the troubled waters; every one settled instantly into his place, and Greisengesang, to give himself a countenance, became absorbed in the arrangement of his papers; but in their eagerness to dissemble, one and all neglected to rise.

"Gentlemen," said the Prince, pausing.

They all got to their feet in a moment; and this reproof still further demoralized the weaker brethren.

The Prince moved slowly toward the lower end of the table; then he paused again, and, fixing his eye on Greisengesang, "How comes it, Herr Cancellarius," he asked, "that I have received no notice of the change of hour?"

"Your Highness," replied the Chancellor, "her Highness the Princess . . . ." and there paused.

"I understood," said Seraphina, taking him up, "that you did not purpose to be present."

Their eyes met for a second, and Seraphina's fell; but her anger only burned the brighter for that private shame.

"And now, gentlemen," said Otto, taking his chair, "I pray you be seated. I have been absent: there are doubtless some arrears; but ere we proceed to business, Herr Grafinski, you will direct four thousand crowns to be sent to me at once. Make a note, if you please," he added, as the treasurer still stared in wonder.

"Four thousand crowns?" asked Seraphina. "Pray, for what?"

"Madam," returned Otto, smiling, "for my own purposes."

Gondremark spurred up Grafinski underneath the table.

"If your Highness will indicate the destination . . . ." began the puppet.

"You are not here, sir, to interrogate your Prince," said Otto.

Grafinski looked for help to his commander; and Gondremark came to his aid, in suave and measured tones.

"Your Highness may reasonably be surprised," he said; "and Herr Grafinski, although I am convinced he is clear of the intention of offending, would have perhaps done better to begin with an explanation. The resources of the State are at the present moment entirely swallowed up, or, as we hope to prove, wisely invested. In a month from now, I do not question we shall be able to meet any command your Highness may lay upon us; but at this hour I fear that, even in so small a matter, he must prepare himself for disappointment. Our zeal is no less, although our power may be inadequate."

"How much, Herr Grafinski, have we in the treasury?" asked Otto.

"Your Highness," protested the treasurer, "we have immediate need of every crown."

"I think, sir, you evade me," flashed the Prince; and then turning to the side table, "Mr. Secretary," he added, "bring me, if you please, the treasury docket."

Herr Grafinski became deadly pale; the Chancellor, expecting his own turn, was probably engaged in prayer; Gondremark was watching like a ponderous cat. Gotthold, on his part, looked on with wonder at his cousin; he was certainly showing spirit, but what, in such a time of gravity, was all this talk of money? and why should he waste his strength upon a personal issue?

"I find," said Otto, with his finger on the docket, "that we have 20,000 crowns in case."

"That is exact, your Highness," replied the Baron. "But our liabilities, all of which are happily not liquid, amount to a far larger sum; and at the present point of time, it would be morally impossible to divert a single florin. Essentially, the case is empty. We have, already presented, a large note for material of war."

"Material of war?" exclaimed Otto, with an excellent assumption of surprise. "But if my memory serves me right, we settled these accounts in January."

"There have been further orders," the Baron explained. "A new park of artillery has been completed; five hundred stand of arms, seven hundred baggage mules—the details are in a special memorandum. Mr. Secretary Holtz, the memorandum, if you please."

"One would think, gentlemen, that we were going to war," said Otto.

"We are," said Seraphina.

"War!" cried the Prince. "And, gentlemen, with whom? The peace of Grünewald has endured for centuries. What aggression, what insult, have we suffered?"

"Here, your Highness," said Gotthold, "is the ultimatum. It was in the very article of signature, when your Highness so opportunely entered."

Otto laid the paper before him; as he read, his fingers played tattoo upon the table. "Was it proposed," he inquired, "to send this paper forth without a knowledge of my pleasure?"

One of the non-combatants, eager to trim, volunteered an answer. "The Herr Doctor von Hohenstockwitz had just entered his dissent," he added.

"Give me the rest of this correspondence," said the Prince. It was handed to him, and he read it patiently from end to end, while the councilors sat foolishly enough looking before them on the table. The secretaries, in the background, were exchanging glances of delight; a row at the council was for them a rare and welcome feature.

"Gentlemen," said Otto, when he had finished, "I have read with pain. This claim upon Obermünsterol is palpably unjust; it has not a tincture, not a show, of justice. There is not in all this ground enough for after-dinner talk, and you propose to force it as a *casus belli.*"

"Certainly, your Highness," returned Gondremark, too wise to defend the indefensible, "the claim on Obermünsterol is simply a pretext."

"It is well," said the Prince. "Herr Cancellarius, take your pen. 'The council,' " he began to dictate—"I withhold all notice of my intervention," he said, in parenthesis and addressing himself more directly to his wife; "and I say nothing of the strange suppression by which this business has been smuggled past my knowledge. I am content to be in time—" 'The council,' " he resumed, " 'on a further examination of the facts, and enlightened by the note in the last despatch from Gerolstein, have the pleasure to announce that they are entirely at one, both as to fact and sentiment, with the Grand Ducal Court of Gerolstein.' You have it? Upon these lines, sir, you will draw up the despatch."

"If your Highness will allow me," said the Baron, "your Highness is so imperfectly acquainted with the internal history of this correspondence, that any interference will be merely hurtful. Such a paper as your Highness proposes, would be to stultify the whole previous policy of Grünewald."

"The policy of Grünewald!" cried the Prince. "One would suppose you had no sense of humor! Would you fish in a coffee cup?"

"With deference, your Highness," returned the Baron, "even in a coffee cup there may be poison. The purpose of this war is not simply territorial enlargement; still less is it a war of glory; for, as your Highness indicates, the state of Grünewald is too small to be ambitious. But the body politic is seriously diseased; republicanism, socialism, many disintegrating ideas are abroad; circle within circle, a really formidable organization has grown up about your Highness's throne."

"I have heard of it, Herr von Gondremark," put in the Prince; "but I have reason to be aware that yours is the more authoritative information."

"I am honored by this expression of my Prince's confidence," returned Gondremark, unabashed. "It is, therefore with a single eye to these disorders, that our present external policy has been shaped. Something was required to divert public attention, to employ the idle, to popularize your Highness's rule, and, if it were possible, to enable him to reduce the taxes at a blow and to a notable amount. The proposed expedition—for it can not without hyperbole be called a war—seemed to the council to combine the various characters required; a marked improvement in the public sentiment has followed even upon our preparations; and I can not doubt that when success shall follow, the effect will surpass even our boldest hopes."

"You are very adroit, Herr von Gondremark," said Otto. "You fill me with admiration. I had not heretofore done justice to your qualities."

Seraphina looked up with joy, supposing Otto conquered; but Gondremark still waited, armed at every point; he knew how very stubborn is the revolt of a weak character.

"And the territorial army scheme, to which I was persuaded to consent—was it secretly directed to the same end?" the Prince asked.

"I still believe the effect to have been good," replied the Baron; "discipline and mounting guard are excellent sedatives. But I will avow to your Highness, I was unaware, at the date of that decree, of the magnitude of the revolutionary movement; nor did any of us, I think, imagine that such a territorial army was a part of the republican proposals."

"It was?" asked Otto. "Strange! Upon what fancied grounds?"

"The grounds were indeed fanciful," returned the Baron. "It was conceived among the leaders that a territorial army, drawn from and returning to the people, would, in the event of any popular uprising, prove lukewarm or unfaithful to the throne."

"I see," said the Prince. "I begin to understand."

"His Highness begins to understand?" repeated Gondremark, with the sweetest politeness. "May I beg of him to complete the phrase?"

"The history of the revolution," replied Otto, dryly. "And now," he added, "what do you conclude?"

"I conclude, your Highness, with a simple reflection," said the Baron, accepting the stab without a quiver, "the war is popular; were the humor contradicted to-morrow, a considerable disappointment would be felt in many classes; and in the present tension of spirits, the most lukewarm sentiment may be enough to precipitate events. There lies the danger. The revolution hangs imminent; we sit, at this council board, below the sword of Damocles."

"We must then lay our heads together," said the Prince, "and devise some honorable means of safety."

Up to this moment, since the first note of opposition fell from the librarian, Seraphina had uttered about twenty words. With a somewhat heightened color, her eyes generally lowered, her foot sometimes nervously tapping on the floor, she had kept her own counsel and commanded her anger like a hero. But at this stage of the engagement she lost control of her impatience.

"Means!" she cried. "They have been found and prepared before you knew the need of them. Sign the despatch, and let us be done with this delay."

"Madam, I said 'honorable,'" returned Otto, bowing. "This war is, in my eyes, and by Herr von Gondremark's account, an inadmissible expedient. If we have misgoverned here in Grünewald, are the people of Gerolstein to bleed and pay for our misdoings? Never, madam; not while I live. But I attach so much importance to all that I have heard to-day for the first time—and why only to-day, I do not even stop to ask—that I am eager to find some plan that I can follow with credit to myself."

"And should you fail?" she asked.

"Should I fail, I will then meet the blow half way," replied the Prince. "On the first open discontent, I shall convoke the States, and, when it pleases them to bid me, abdicate."

Seraphina laughed angrily. "This is the man for whom we have been laboring!" she cried. "We tell him of change; he will devise the means, he says; and his device is abdication? Sir, have you no shame to come here at the eleventh hour among those who have borne the heat and burden of the day? Do you not wonder at yourself? I, sir, was here in my place, striving to uphold your dignity alone. I took counsel with the wisest I could find, while you were eating and hunting. I have laid my plans with foresight; they were ripe for action; and then—" she choked—"then you return—for a forenoon—to ruin all! To-morrow, you will be once more about your pleasures; you will give us leave once more to think and work for you; and again you will come back, and again you will thwart what you had not the industry or knowledge to conceive. Oh! it is intolerable. Be modest, sir. Do not presume upon the rank you can not worthily uphold. I would not issue my commands with so much gusto—it is from no merit in yourself they are obeyed. What are you? What have you to do in this grave council? Go," she cried, "go among your equals! The very people in the streets mock at you for a prince."

At this surprising outburst the whole council sat aghast.

"Madam," said the Baron, alarmed out of his caution, "command yourself."

"Address yourself to me, sir!" cried the Prince. "I will not bear these whisperings!"

Seraphina burst into tears.

"Sir," cried the Baron, rising, "this lady—"

"Herr von Gondremark," said the Prince, "one more observation, and I place you under arrest."

"Your Highness is the master," replied Gondremark, bowing.

"Bear it in mind more constantly," said Otto. "Herr Cancellarius, bring all the papers to my cabinet. Gentlemen, the council is dissolved."

And he bowed and left the apartment, followed by Greisengesang and the secretaries, just at the moment when the Princess's ladies, summoned in all haste, entered by another door to help her forth.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PARTY OF WAR TAKES ACTION

HALF an hour after, Gondremark was once more closeted with Seraphina.

"Where is he now?" she asked, on his arrival.

"Madam, he is with the Chancellor," replied the Baron. "Wonder of wonders, he is at work!"

"Ah," she said, "he was born to torture me! Oh, what a fall, what a humiliation! Such a scheme to wreck upon so small a trifle! But now all is lost."

"Madam," said Gondremark, "nothing is lost. Something, on the other hand, is found. You have found your senses; you see him as he is—see him as you see everything where your too-good heart is not in question—with the judicial, with the statesman's eye. So long as he had a right to interfere, the empire that may be was still distant. I have not entered on this course without the plain foresight of its dangers; and even for this I was prepared. But, madam, I knew two things: I knew that you were born to command, that I was born to serve; I knew that by a rare conjuncture, the hand had found the tool; and from the first I was confident, as I am confident to-day, that no hereditary trifler has the power to shatter that alliance."

"I, born to command!" she said. "Do you forget my tears?"

"Madam, they were the tears of Alexander," cried the Baron. "They touched, they thrilled me; I forgot myself a moment—even I! But do you suppose that I had not remarked, that I had not admired, your previous bearing? your great self-command? Ay, that was princely!" He paused. "It was a thing to see. I drank confidence! I tried to imitate your calm. And I was well inspired; in my heart, I think that I was well inspired; that any man within the reach of argument, had been convinced! But it was not to be; nor, madam, do I regret the failure. Let us be open; let me disclose my heart. I have loved two things, not unworthily: Grünewald and my sovereign!" Here he kissed her hand. "Either I must resign my ministry, leave the land of my adoption and the queen whom I had chosen to obey—or—" He paused again.

"Alas, Herr von Gondremark, there is no 'or,' " said Seraphina.

"Nay, madam, give me time," he replied. When first I saw you, you were still young; not every man would have remarked your powers; but I had not been twice honored by your conversation ere I found my mistress. I have, madam, I believe, some genius; and I have much ambition. But the genius is of the serving kind; and to offer a career to my ambition, I had to find one born to rule. This is the base and essence of our union; each had need of the other; each recognized, master and servant, lever and fulcrum, the complement of his endowment. Marriages, they say, are made in heaven: how much more these pure, laborious, intellectual fellowships, born to found empires! Nor is this all. We found each other ripe, filled with great ideas that took shape and clarified with every word. We grew together—ay, madam, in mind we grew together like twin children. All of my life until we met was petty and groping; was it not—I will flatter myself openly—it *was* the same with you! Not till then had you those eagle surveys, that wide and hopeful sweep of intuition! Thus we had formed ourselves, and we were ready."

"It is true," she cried. "I feel it. Yours is the genius; your generosity confounds your insight; all I could offer you was the position, was this throne, to be a fulcrum. But I offered it without reserve; I entered at least warmly into all your thoughts; you were sure of me—sure of my support—certain of justice. Tell me, tell me again, that I have helped you."

"Nay, madam," he said, "you made me. In everything you were my inspiration. And as we prepared our policy, weighing every step, how often have I had to admire your perspicacity, your manlike diligence and fortitude! You know that these are not the words of flattery; your conscience echoes them; have you spared a day? have you indulged yourself in any pleasure? Young and beautiful, you have lived a life of high intellectual effort, of irksome intellectual patience with details. Well, you have your reward: with the fall of Brandenau, the throne of your Empire is founded."

"What thought have you in your mind?" she asked. "Is not all ruined?"

"Nay, my Princess, the same thought is in both our minds," he said.

"Herr von Gondremark," she replied, "by all that I hold sacred, I have none; I do not think at all; I am crushed."

"You are looking at the passionate side of a rich nature, misunderstood and recently insulted," said the Baron. "Look into your intellect, and tell me."

"I find nothing, nothing but tumult," she replied.

"You find one word branded, madam," returned the Baron: " 'Abdication!' "

"Oh!" she cried. "The coward! He leaves me to bear all, and in the hour of trial he stabs me from behind. There is nothing in him, not respect, not love, not courage—his wife, his dignity, his throne, the honor of his father, he forgets them all!"

"Yes," pursued the Baron, "the word Abdication. I perceive a glimmering there."

"I read your fancy," she returned. "It is mere madness, midsummer madness. Baron, I am more unpopular than he. You know it. They can excuse, they can love, his weakness; but me, they hate."

"Such is the gratitude of peoples," said the Baron. "But we trifle. Here, madam, are my plain thoughts. The man who in the hour of danger speaks of abdication is, for me a venomous animal. I speak with the bluntness of gravity, madam; this is no hour for mincing. The coward, in a station of authority, is more dangerous than fire. We dwell on a volcano; if this man can have his way, Grünewald before a week will have been deluged with innocent blood. You know the truth of what I say; we have looked unblenching into this ever-possible catastrophe. To him it is nothing: he will abdicate! Abdicate, just God! and this unhappy country committed to his charge, and the lives of men and the honor of women . . ." His voice appeared to fail him; in an instant he had conquered his emotion and resumed: "But you, madam, conceive more worthily of your responsibilities. I am with you in the thought; and in the face of the horrors that I see impending, I say, and your heart repeats it—we have gone too far to pause. Honor, duty, ay, and the care of our own lives, demand we should proceed."

She was looking at him, her brow thoughtfully knitted. "I feel it," she said. "But how? He has the power."

"The power, madam? The power is in the army," he replied; and then hastily, ere she could intervene, "we have to save ourselves," he went on; "I have to save my Princess, she has to save her minister; we have both of us to save this infatuated youth from his own madness. He in the outbreak would be the earliest victim; I see him," he cried, "torn in pieces; and Grünewald, unhappy Grünewald! Nay, madam, you who have the power must use it; it lies hard upon your conscience."

"Show me how!" she cried. "Suppose I were to place him under some constraint, the revolution would break upon us instantly."

The Baron feigned defeat. "It is true," he said. "You see more clearly than I do. Yet there should, there must be, some way." And he waited for his chance.

"No," she said; "I told you from the first there is no remedy. Our hopes are lost: lost by one miserable trifler, ignorant, fretful, fitful—who will have disappeared tomorrow, who knows? to his boorish pleasures!"

Any peg would do for Gondremark. "The thing!" he cried, striking his brow. "Fool, not to have thought of it! Madam, without perhaps knowing it, you have solved our problem."

"What do you mean? Speak!" she said.

He appeared to collect himself; and then, with a smile, "The Prince," he said, "must go once more a-hunting."

"Ay, if he would!" cried she, "and stay there!"

"And stay there," echoed the Baron. It was so significantly said, that her face changed; and the schemer, fearful of the sinister ambiguity of his expressions, hastened to explain. "This time he shall go hunting in a carriage, with a good escort of our foreign lancers. His destination shall be the Felsenburg; it is healthy, the rock is high, the windows are small and barred; it might have been built on purpose. We shall entrust the captaincy to the Scotchman Gordon; he at least will have no scruple. Who will miss the sovereign? He is gone hunting; he came home on Tuesday, on Thursday he returned; all is usual in that. Meanwhile the war proceeds; our Prince will soon weary of his solitude; and about the time of our triumph, or, if he prove very obstinate, a little later, he shall be released upon a proper understanding, and I see him once more directing his theatricals."

Seraphina sat gloomy, plunged in thought. "Yes," she said suddenly, "and the despatch? He is now writing it."

"It can not pass the council before Friday," replied Gondremark; "and as for any private note, the messengers are all at my disposal. They are picked men, madam. I am a person of precaution."

"It would appear so," she said, with a flash of her occasional repugnance to the man; and then after a pause, "Herr von Gondremark," she added, "I recoil from this extremity."

"I share your Highness's repugnance," answered he. "But what would you have? We are defenseless, else."

"I see it, but this is sudden. It is a public crime," she said, nodding at him with a sort of horror.

"Look but a little deeper," he returned, "and whose is the crime?"

"His!" she cried. "His, before God! And I hold him liable. But still—"

"It is not as if he would be harmed," submitted Gondremark.

"I know it," she replied, but it was still unheartily.

And then, as brave men are entitled, by prescriptive right as old as the world's history, to the alliance and the active help of Fortune, the punctual goddess stepped down from the machine. One of the Princess's ladies begged to enter; a man, it appeared, had brought a line for the Freiherr von Gondremark. It proved to be a pencil billet, which the crafty Greisengesang had found the means to scribble and despatch under the very guns of Otto; and the daring of the act bore testimony to the terror of the actor. For Greisengesang had but one influential motive: fear.

The note ran thus:

> "At the first council, procuration to be withdrawn.
>
> "CORN. GREIS."

So, after three years of exercise, the right of signature was to be stripped from Seraphina. It was more than an insult; it was a public disgrace; and she did not pause to consider how she had earned it, but morally bounded under the attack as bounds the wounded tiger.

"Enough," she said; "I will sign the order. When shall he leave?"

"It will take me twelve hours to collect my men, and it had best be done at night. To-morrow midnight, if you please?" answered the Baron.

"Excellent," she said. "My door is always open to you, Baron. As soon as the order is prepared, bring it to me to sign."

"Madam," he said, "alone of all of us you do not risk your head in this adventure. For that reason, and to prevent all hesitation, I venture to propose the order should be in your hand throughout."

"You are right," she replied.

He laid a form before her, and she wrote the order in a clear hand, and reread it. Suddenly a cruel smile came on her face. "I had forgotten his puppet," said she. "They will keep each other company." And she interlined and initialed the condemnation of Doctor Gotthold.

"Your Highness has more memory than your servant," said the Baron; and then he, in his turn, carefully perused the fateful paper. "Good!" said he.

"You will appear in the drawing-room, Baron?" she asked.

"I thought it better," said he, "to avoid the possibility of a public affront. Anything that shook my credit might hamper us in the immediate future."

"You are right," she said; and she held out her hand as to an old friend and equal.

CHAPTER IX

THE PRICE OF THE RIVER FARM; IN WHICH VAINGLORY GOES BEFORE A FALL

THE pistol had been practically fired. Under ordinary circumstances the scene at the council table would have entirely exhausted Otto's store both of energy and anger; he would have begun to examine and condemn his conduct, have remembered all that was true, forgotten all that was unjust in Seraphina's onslaught; and by half an hour after, would have fallen into that state of mind in which a Catholic flees to the confessional and a sot takes refuge with the bottle. Two matters of detail preserved his spirits. For, first, he had still an infinity of business to transact; and to transact business, for a man of Otto's neglectful and procrastinating habits, is the best anodyne for conscience. All afternoon he was hard at it with the Chancellor, reading, dictating, signing, and despatching papers; and this kept him in a glow of self-approval. But, secondly, his vanity was still alarmed; he had failed to get the money; to-morrow before noon he would have to disappoint old Killian; and in the eyes of that family which counted him so little, and to which he had sought to play the part of the heroic comforter, he must sink lower than at first. To a man of Otto's temper, this was death. He could not accept the situation. And even as he worked, and worked wisely and well, over the hated details of his principality, he was secretly maturing a plan by which to turn the situation. It was a scheme as pleasing to the man as it was dishonorable in the prince; in which his frivolous nature found and took vengeance for the gravity and burden of the afternoon. He chuckled as he thought of it: and Greisengesang heard him with wonder, and attributed his lively spirits to the skirmish of the morning.

Led by this idea, the antique courtier ventured to compliment his sovereign on his bearing. It reminded him, he said, of Otto's father.

"What?" asked the Prince, whose thoughts were miles away.

"Your Highness's authority at the board," explained the flatterer.

"Oh, that! Oh, yes," returned Otto; but for all his carelessness, his vanity was delicately tickled, and his mind returned and dwelled approvingly over the details of his victory. "I quelled them all," he thought.

When the more pressing matters had been dismissed, it was already late, and Otto kept the Chancellor to dinner, and was entertained with a leash of ancient histories and modern compliments. The Chancellor's career had been based, from the first off-put, on entire subserviency; he had crawled into honors and employments; and his mind was prostitute. The instinct of the creature served him well with Otto. First, he let fall a sneering word or two upon the female intellect; thence he proceeded to a closer engagement; and before the third course he was artfully dissecting Seraphina's character to her approving husband. Of course no names were used; and of course the identity of that abstract or ideal man, with whom she was currently contrasted, remained an open secret. But this stiff old gentleman had a wonderful instinct for evil, thus to wind his way into man's citadel; thus to harp by the hour on the virtues of his hearer and not once alarm his self-respect. Otto was all roseate, in and out, with flattery and Tokay and an approving conscience. He saw himself in the most attractive colors. If even Greisengesang, he thought, could thus espy the loose stitches in Seraphina's character, and thus disloyally impart them to the opposite camp, he, the discarded husband—the dispossessed Prince—could scarce have erred on the side of severity.

In this excellent frame he bade adieu to the old gentleman, whose voice had proved so musical, and set forth for the drawing-room. Already on the stair, he was seized with some compunction; but when he entered the great gallery and beheld his wife, the Chancellor's abstract flatteries fell from him like rain, and he reawoke to the poetic facts of life. She stood a good way off below a shining luster, her back turned. The bend of her waist overcame him with a physical weakness. This was the girl-wife who had lain in his arms and whom he had sworn to cherish; there was she, who was better than success.

It was Seraphina who restored him from the blow. She swam forward and smiled upon her husband with a sweetness that was insultingly artificial. "Frédéric," she lisped, "you are late." It was a scene of high comedy, such as is proper to unhappy marriages; and her aplomb disgusted him.

There was no etiquette at these small drawing-rooms. People came and went at pleasure. The window embrasures became the roost of happy couples; at the great chimney, the talkers mostly congregated, each full-charged with scandal; and down at the farther end the gamblers gambled. It was toward this point that Otto moved, not ostentatiously, but with a gentle insistence, and scattering attentions as he went. Once abreast of the card-table, he placed himself opposite to Madame von Rosen, and, as soon as he caught her eye, withdrew to the embrasure of a window. There she had speedily joined him.

"You did well to call me," she said, a little wildly. "These cards will be my ruin."

"Leave them," said Otto.

"I!" she cried, and laughed; "they are my destiny. My only chance was to die of a consumption; now I must die in a garret."

"You are bitter to-night," said Otto.

"I have been losing," she replied. "You do not know what greed is."

"I have come, then, in an evil hour," said he.

"Ah, you wish a favor!" she cried, brightening beautifully.

"Madam," said he, "I am about to found my party, and I come to you for a recruit."

"Done," said the Countess. "I am a man again."

"I may be wrong," continued Otto, "but I believe upon my heart you wish me no ill."

"I wish you so well," she said, "that I dare not tell it you."

"Then if I ask my favor?" quoth the Prince.

"Ask it, *mon Prince,*" she answered. "Whatever it is, it is granted."

"I wish you," he returned, "this very night to make the farmer our talk."

"Heaven knows your meaning!" she exclaimed. "I know not, neither care; there are no bounds to my desire to please you. Call him made."

"I will put it in another way," returned Otto. "Did you ever steal?"

"Often," cried the Countess. "I have broken all the ten commandments; and if there were more to-morrow I should not sleep till I had broken these."

"This is a case of burglary; to say truth, I thought it would amuse you," said the Prince.

"I have no practical experience," she replied, "but oh! the good-will! I have broken a work-box in my time, and several hearts, my own included. Never a house! But it can not be difficult; sins are so unromantically easy! What are we to break?"

"Madam, we are to break the treasury," said Otto; and he sketched to her briefly, wittily, with here and there a touch of pathos, the story of his visit to the farm, of his promise to buy it, and of the refusal with which his demand for money had been met that morning at the council; concluding with a few practical words as to the treasury windows, and the helps and hindrances of the proposed exploit.

"They refused you the money," she said, when he had done. "And you accepted the refusal? Well!"

"They gave their reasons," replied Otto, coloring. "They were not such as I could combat; and I am driven to dilapidate the funds of my own country by a theft. It is not dignified; but it is fun."

"Fun," she said; "yes." And then she remained silently plunged in thought for an appreciable time. "How much do you require?" she asked at length.

"Three thousand crowns will do," he answered, "for I have still some money of my own."

"Excellent," she said, regaining her levity. "I am your true accomplice. And where are we to meet?"

"You know the Flying Mercury," he answered, "in the Park? Three pathways intersect; there they have made a seat and raised the statue. The spot is handy, and the deity congenial."

"Child," she said, and tapped him with her fan. "But do you know, my Prince, you are an egoist—your handy trysting-place is miles from me. You must give me ample time; I can not, I think, possibly be there before two. But as the bell beats two, your helper shall arrive: welcome, I trust. Stay—do you bring any one?" she added. "Oh, it is not for a chaperon—I am not a prude!"

"I shall bring a groom of mine," said Otto. "I caught him stealing corn."

"His name?" she asked.

"I profess I know not. I am not yet intimate with my corn-stealer," returned the Prince. "It was in a professional capacity—"

"Like me! Flatterer!" she cried. "But oblige me in one thing. Let me find you waiting at the seat—yes, you shall await me; for on this expedition it shall be no longer Prince and Countess, it shall be the lady and the squire—and your friend the thief shall be no nearer than the fountain. Do you promise?"

"Madam, in everything you are to command; you shall be captain, I am but supercargo," answered Otto.

"Well, Heaven bring all safe to port!" she said. "It is not Friday!"

Something in her manner had puzzled Otto, had possibly touched him with suspicion.

"Is it not strange," he remarked, "that I should choose my accomplice from the other camp?"

"Fool!" she said. "But it is your only wisdom that you know your friends." And suddenly, in the vantage of the deep window, she caught up his hand and kissed it with a sort of passion. "Now, go," she added, "go at once."

He went, somewhat staggered, doubting in his heart that he was overbold. For in that moment she had flashed upon him like a jewel; and even through the strong panoply of a previous love he had been conscious of a shock. Next moment he had dismissed the fear.

Both Otto and the Countess retired early from the drawing-room; and the Prince, after an elaborate feint, dismissed his valet and went forth by the private passage and the back postern in quest of the groom.

Once more the stable was in darkness, once more Otto employed the talismanic knock, and once more the groom appeared and sickened with terror.

"Good evening, friend," said Otto, pleasantly. "I want you to bring a corn sack—empty this time—and to accompany me. We shall be gone all night."

"Your Highness," groaned the man, "I have the charge of the small stables. I am here alone."

"Come," said the Prince, "you are no such martinet in duty." And then seeing that the man was shaking from head to foot, Otto laid a hand upon his shoulder. "If I meant you harm," he said, "should I be here?"

The fellow became instantly reassured. He got the sack; and Otto led him round by several paths and avenues, conversing pleasantly by the way, and left him at last planted by a certain fountain where a goggle-eyed Triton spouted intermittently into a rippling laver. Thence he proceeded alone to where, in a round clearing, a copy of Gian Bologna's Mercury stood tiptoe in the twilight of the stars. The night was warm and windless. A shaving of new moon had lately arisen; but it was still too small and too low down in heaven to contend with the immense host of lesser luminaries; and the rough face of the earth was drenched with starlight. Down one of the alleys, which widened as it receded, he could see a part of the lamplit terrace where a sentry silently paced, and beyond that a corner of the town with interlacing street-lights. But all around him the young trees stood mystically blurred in the dim shine; and in the stock-still quietness the upleaping god appeared alive.

In this dimness and silence of the night, Otto's conscience became suddenly and staringly luminous like the dial of a city clock. He averted the eyes of his mind, but the finger, rapidly traveling, pointed to a series of misdeeds that took his breath away. What was he doing in that place? The money had been wrongly squandered, but that was largely by his own neglect. And he now proposed to embarrass the finances of this country which he had been too idle to govern. And he now proposed to squander the money once again, and this time for a private, if a generous end. And the man whom he had reproved for stealing corn, he was now to set stealing treasure. And then there was Madame von Rosen, upon whom he looked down with some of that ill-favored contempt of the chaste male for the imperfect woman. Because he thought of her as one degraded below scruples, he had picked her out to be still more degraded, and to risk her whole irregular establishment in life by complicity in this dishonorable act. It was uglier than a seduction.

Otto had to walk very briskly and whistle very busily; and when at last he heard steps in the narrowest and darkest of the alleys, it was with a gush of relief that he sprang to meet the Countess. To wrestle alone with one's good angel is so hard! and so precious, at the proper time, is a companion certain to be less virtuous than oneself!

It was a young man who came toward him—a young man of small stature and a peculiar gait, wearing a wide flapping hat, and carrying, with great weariness, a heavy bag. Otto recoiled; but the young man held up his hand by way of signal, and coming up with a panting run, as if with the last of his endurance, laid the bag upon the ground, threw himself upon the bench, and disclosed the features of Madame von Rosen.

"You, Countess!" cried the Prince.

"No, no," she panted, "the Count von Rosen—my young brother. A capital fellow. Let him get his breath."

"Ah, madam . . . ." said he.

"Call me Count," she returned, "respect my incognito."

"Count be it, then," he replied. "And let me implore that gallant gentleman to set forth at once on our enterprise."

"Sit down beside me here," she returned, patting the further corner of the bench. "I will follow you in a moment. Oh, I am so tired—feel how my heart leaps! Where is your thief?"

"At his post," replied Otto. "Shall I introduce him? He seems an excellent companion."

"No," she said, "do not hurry me yet. I must speak to you. Not but I adore your thief; I adore any one who has the spirit to do wrong. I never cared for virtue till I fell in love with my Prince." She laughed musically. "And even so, it is not for your virtues," she added.

Otto was embarrassed. "And now," he asked, "if you are anyway rested?"

"Presently, presently. Let me breathe," she said, panting a little harder than before.

"And what has so wearied you?" he asked. "This bag? And why, in the name of eccentricity, a bag? For an empty one, you might have relied on my own foresight; and this one is very far from being empty. My dear Count, with what trash have you come laden? But the shortest method is to see for myself." And he put down his hand.

She stopped him at once. "Otto," she said, "no—not that way. I will tell, I will make a clean breast. It is done already. I have robbed the treasury single-handed. There are three thousand two hundred crowns. Oh, I trust it is enough!"

Her embarrassment was so obvious that the Prince was struck into a muse, gazing in her face, with his hand still outstretched, and she still holding him by the wrist. "You!" he said, at last. "How?" And then drawing himself up, "Oh, madam," he cried, "I understand. You must indeed think meanly of the Prince."

"Well then, it was a lie!" she cried. "The money is mine, honestly my own—now yours. This was an unworthy act that you proposed. But I love your honor, and I swore to myself that I should save it in your teeth. I beg of you to let me save it"—with a sudden lovely change of tone. "Otto, I beseech you let me save it. Take this dross from your poor friend who loves you!"

"Madam, madam," babbled Otto, in the extreme of misery, "I can not—I must go."

And he half rose; but she was on the ground before him in an instant, clasping his knees. "No," she gasped, "you shall not go. Do you despise me so entirely? It is dross; I hate it; I should squander it at play and be no richer; it is an investment; it is to save me from ruin. Otto," she cried, as he again feebly tried to put her from him, "if you leave me alone in this disgrace, I will die here!" He groaned aloud. "Oh," she said, "think what I suffer! If you suffer from a piece of delicacy, think what I suffer in my shame! To have my trash refused! You would rather steal, you think of me so basely! You would rather tread my heart in pieces! Oh, unkind! Oh, my Prince! Oh, Otto! Oh, pity me!" She was still clasping him; then she found his hand and covered it with kisses, and at this his head began to turn. "Oh," she cried again, "I see it! Oh, what a horror! It is because I am old, because I am no longer beautiful." And she burst into a storm of sobs.

This was the *coup de grâce.* Otto had now to comfort and compose her as he could, and before many words, the money was accepted. Between the woman and the weak man such was the inevitable end. Madame von Rosen instantly composed her sobs. She thanked him with a fluttering voice, and resumed her place upon the bench at the far end from Otto. "Now you see," she said, "why I bade you keep the thief at distance, and why I came alone. How I trembled for my treasure!"

"Madam," said Otto, with a tearful whimper in his voice, "spare me! You are too good, too noble!"

"I wonder to hear you," she returned. "You have avoided a great folly. You will be able to meet your good old peasant. You have found an excellent investment for a friend's money. You have preferred essential kindness to an empty scruple; and now you are ashamed of it. You have made your friend happy; and now you mourn as the dove! Come, cheer up. I know it is depressing to have done exactly right; but you need not make a practise of it. Forgive yourself this virtue; come now, look me in the face and smile!"

He did look at her. When a man has been embraced by a woman, he sees her in a glamour; and at such a time, in the baffling glimmer of the stars, she will look wildly well. The hair is touched with light; the eyes are constellations; the face sketched in shadows—a sketch, you might say, by passion. Otto became consoled for his defeat; he began to take an interest. "No," he said, "I am no ingrate."

"You promised me fun," she returned, with a laugh. "I have given you as good. We have had a stormy *scena.*"

He laughed in his turn, and the sound of the laughter, in either case, was hardly reassuring.

"Come, what are you going to give me in exchange," she continued, "for my excellent declamation?"

"What you will," he said.

"Whatever I will? Upon your honor? Suppose I asked the crown?" She was flashing upon him, beautiful in triumph.

"Upon my honor," he replied.

"Shall I ask the crown?" she continued. "Nay; what should I do with it? Grünewald is but a petty state; my ambition swells above it. I shall ask—I find I want nothing," she concluded. "I will give you something instead. I will give you leave to kiss me—once."

Otto drew near and she put up her face; they were both smiling, both on the brink of laughter, all was so innocent and playful; and the Prince, when their lips encountered, was dumfounded by the sudden convulsion of his being. Both drew instantly apart, and for an appreciable time sat tongue-tied. Otto was indistinctly conscious of a peril in the silence, but could find no words to utter. Suddenly the Countess seemed to awake. "As for your wife—" she began in a clear and steady voice.

The word recalled Otto, with a shudder, from his trance. "I will hear nothing against my wife," he cried wildly; and then, recovering himself and in a kindlier tone, "I will tell you my one secret," he added. "I love my wife."

"You should have let me finish," she returned, smiling. "Do you suppose I did not mention her on purpose? You know you had lost your head. Well, so had I. Come now, do not be abashed by words," she added, somewhat sharply. "It is the one thing I despise. If you are not a fool, you will see that I am building fortresses about your virtue.

And at any rate, I choose that you shall understand that I am not dying of love for you. It is a very smiling business; no tragedy for me! And now here is what I have to say about your wife: She is not and she never has been Gondremark's mistress. Be sure he would have boasted if she had. Good night!"

And in a moment she was gone down the alley, and Otto was alone with the bag of money and the flying god.

CHAPTER X

GOTTHOLD'S REVISED OPINION; AND THE FALL COMPLETED

THE Countess left poor Otto with a caress and buffet simultaneously administered. The welcome word about his wife and the virtuous ending of his interview should doubtless have delighted him. But for all that, as he shouldered the bag of money and set forward to rejoin his groom, he was conscious of many aching sensibilities. To have gone wrong and to have been set right, makes but a double trial for man's vanity. The discovery of his own weakness and possible unfaith had staggered him to the heart; and to hear, in the same hour, of his wife's fidelity from one who loved her not, increased the bitterness of the surprise.

He was about half-way between the fountain and the Flying Mercury before his thoughts began to be clear; and he was surprised to find them resentful. He paused in a kind of temper, and struck with his hand a little shrub. Thence there arose instantly a cloud of awakened sparrows, which as instantly dispersed and disappeared into the thicket. He looked at them stupidly, and when they were gone continued staring at the stars. "I am angry. By what right? By none!" he thought; but he was still angry. He cursed Madame von Rosen and instantly repented. Heavy was the money on his shoulders.

When he reached the fountain, he did, out of ill-humor and parade, an unpardonable act. He gave the money bodily to the dishonest groom. "Keep this for me," he said, "until I call for it to-morrow. It is a great sum, and by that you will judge that I have not condemned you." And he strode away ruffling, as if he had done something generous. It was a desperate stroke to reenter at the point of the bayonet into his self-esteem; and, like all such, it was fruitless in the end. He got to bed with the devil, it appeared: kicked and tumbled till the gray of the morning; and then fell inopportunely into a leaden slumber, and awoke to find it ten. To miss the appointment with old Killian after all, had been too tragic a miscarriage: and he hurried with all his might, found the groom (for a wonder) faithful to his trust, and arrived only a few minutes before noon in the guest-chamber of the Morning Star. Killian was there in his Sunday's best and looking very gaunt and rigid; a lawyer from Brandenau stood sentinel over his outspread papers; and the groom and the landlord of the inn were called to serve as witnesses. The obvious deference of that great man, the innkeeper, plainly affected the old farmer with surprise; but it was not until Otto had taken the pen and signed that the truth flashed upon him fully. Then, indeed, he was beside himself.

"His Highness!" he cried, "His Highness!" and repeated the exclamation till his mind had grappled fairly with the facts. Then he turned to the witnesses. "Gentlemen," he said, "you dwell in a country highly favored by God; for of all generous gentlemen, I will say it on my conscience, this one is the king. I am an old man, and I have seen good and bad, and the year of the great famine; but a more excellent gentleman, no, never."

"We know that," cried the landlord, "we know that well in Grünewald. If we saw more of his Highness we should be the better pleased."

"It is the kindest Prince," began the groom, and suddenly closed his mouth upon a sob, so that every one turned to gaze upon his emotion. Otto not last; Otto struck with remorse, to see the man so grateful.

Then it was the lawyer's turn to pay a compliment. "I do not know what Providence may hold in store," he said, "but this day should be a bright one in the annals of your reign. The shouts of armies could not be more eloquent than the emotion of these honest faces." And the Brandenau lawyer bowed, skipped, stepped back and took snuff, with the air of a man who has found and seized an opportunity.

"Well, young gentleman," said Killian, "if you will pardon me the plainness of calling you a gentleman, many a good day's work you have done, I doubt not, but never a better, or one that will be better blessed; and whatever, sir, may be your happiness and triumph in that high sphere to which you have been called, it will be none the worse, sir, for an old man's blessing!"

The scene had almost assumed the proportions of an ovation; and when the Prince escaped he had but one thought: to go wherever he was most sure of praise. His conduct at the board of council occurred to him as a fair chapter; and this evoked the memory of Gotthold. To Gotthold he would go.

Gotthold was in the library as usual, and laid down his pen, a little angrily, on Otto's entrance. "Well," he said, "here you are."

"Well," returned Otto, "we made a revolution, I believe."

"It is what I fear," returned the Doctor.

"How?" said Otto. "Fear? Fear is the burned child. I have learned my strength and the weakness of the others; and I now mean to govern."

Gotthold said nothing, but he looked down and smoothed his chin.

"You disapprove?" cried Otto. "You are a weathercock."

"On the contrary," replied the Doctor. "My observation has confirmed my fears. It will not do, Otto, not do."

"What will not do?" demanded the Prince, with a sickening stab of pain.

"None of it," answered Gotthold. "You are unfitted for a life of action; you lack the stamina, the habit, the restraint, the patience. Your wife is greatly better, vastly better; and though she is in bad hands, displays a very different aptitude. She is a woman of affairs; you are—dear boy, you are yourself. I bid you back to your amusements; like a smiling dominie, I give you holidays for life. Yes," he continued, "there is a day appointed for all when they shall turn again upon their own philosophy. I had grown to disbelieve impartially in all; and if in the atlas of the sciences there were two charts I disbelieved in more than all the rest, they were politics and morals. I had a sneaking kindness for your vices; as they were negative, they flattered my philosophy, and I called them almost virtues. Well, Otto, I was wrong; I have forsworn my skeptical philosophy; and I perceive your faults to be unpardonable. You are unfit to be a Prince, unfit to be a husband. And I give you my word, I would rather see a man capably doing evil than blundering about good."

Otto was still silent, in extreme dudgeon.

Presently the Doctor resumed: "I will take the smaller matter first: your conduct to your wife. You went, I hear, and had an explanation. That may have been right or wrong; I know not; at least, you had stirred her temper. At the council she insults you; well, you insult her back—a man to a woman, a husband to his wife, in public! Next upon the back of this, you propose—the story runs like wildfire—to recall the power of signature. Can she ever forgive that? a woman—a young woman—ambitious, conscious of talents beyond yours? Never, Otto. And to sum all, at such a crisis in your married life, you get into a window corner with that ogling dame von Rosen. I do not dream that there was any harm; but I do say it was an idle disrespect to your wife. Why, man, the woman is not decent."

"Gotthold," said Otto, "I will hear no evil of the Countess."

"You will certainly hear no good of her," returned Gotthold; "and if you wish your wife to be the pink of nicety, you should clear your court of demi-reputations."

"The commonplace injustice of a byword," Otto cried. "The partiality of sex. She is a demi-rep; what then is Gondremark? Were she a man—"

"It would be all one," retorted Gotthold, roughly. "When I see a man, come to years of wisdom, who speaks in double meanings and is the braggart of his vices, I spit on the other side. 'You, my friend,' say I, 'are not even a gentleman.' Well, she's not even a lady."

"She is the best friend I have, and I choose that she shall be respected," Otto said.

"If she is your friend, so much the worse," replied the Doctor. "It will not stop there."

"Ah!" cried Otto, "there is the charity of virtue! All evil in the spotted fruit. But I can tell you, sir, that you do Madame von Rosen prodigal injustice."

"You can tell me!" said the Doctor, shrewdly. "Have you tried? have you been riding the marches?"

The blood came into Otto's face.

"Ah!" cried Gotthold, "look at your wife and blush! There's a wife for a man to marry and then lose! She's a carnation, Otto. The soul is in her eyes."

"You have changed your note for Seraphina, I perceive," said Otto.

"Changed it!" cried the Doctor, with a flush. "Why, when was it different? But I own I admired her at the council. When she sat there silent, tapping with her foot, I admired her as I might a hurricane. Were I one of those who venture upon matrimony, there had been the prize to tempt me! She invites, as Mexico invited Cortez; the enterprise is hard, the natives are unfriendly—I believe them cruel too—but the metropolis is paved with gold and the breeze blows out of paradise. Yes, I could desire to be that conqueror. But to philander with von Rosen; never! Senses? I discard them; what are they?—pruritus! Curiosity? Reach me my Anatomy!"

"To whom do you address yourself?" cried Otto. "Surely, you, of all men, know that I love my wife!"

"Oh, love!" cried Gotthold; "love is a great word; it is in all the dictionaries. If you had loved, she would have paid you back. What does she ask? A little ardor!"

"It is hard to love for two," replied the Prince.

"Hard? Why, there's the touchstone! Oh, I know my poets!" cried the Doctor. "We are but dust and fire, too arid to endure life's scorching; and love, like the shadow of a great rock, should lend shelter and refreshment, not to the lover only, but to his mistress and to the children that reward them; and their very friends should seek repose in the fringes of that peace. Love is not love that can not build a home. And you call it love to grudge and quarrel and pick faults? You call it love to thwart her to her face, and bandy insults? Love!"

"Gotthold, you are unjust. I was then fighting for my country," said the Prince.

"Ay, and there's the worst of all," returned the Doctor. "You could not even see that you were wrong; that being where they were, retreat was ruin."

"Why, you supported me!" cried Otto.

"I did. I was a fool like you," replied Gotthold. "But now my eyes are open. If you go on as you have started, disgrace this fellow Gondremark, and publish the scandal of your divided house, there will befall a most abominable thing in Grünewald. A revolution, friend—a revolution."

"You speak strangely for a red," said Otto.

"A red republican, but not a revolutionary," returned the Doctor. "An ugly thing is a Grünewalder drunk! One man alone can save the country from this pass, and that is the double-dealer Gondremark, with whom I conjure you to make peace. It will not be you; it never can be you:—you, who can do nothing, as your wife said, but trade upon your station—you, who spent the hours in begging money! And in God's name, what for? Why money! What mystery of idiocy was this?"

"It was to no ill end. It was to buy a farm," quoth Otto, sulkily.

"To buy a farm!" cried Gotthold. "Buy a farm!"

"Well, what then?" returned Otto. "I have bought it, if you come to that."

Gotthold fairly bounded on his seat. "And how that?" he cried.

"How?" repeated Otto, startled.

"Ay, verily, how!" returned the Doctor. "How came you by the money?"

The Prince's countenance darkened. "That is my affair," said he.

"You see you are ashamed," retorted Gotthold. "And so you bought a farm in the hour of your country's need—doubtless to be ready for the abdication; and I put it that you stole the funds. There are not three ways of getting money: there are but two: to earn and steal. And now, when you have combined Charles the Fifth and Long-fingered Tom, you come to me to fortify your vanity! But I will clear my mind upon this matter: until I know the right and wrong of the transaction, I put my hand behind my back. A man may be the pitifulest prince, he must be a spotless gentleman."

The Prince had gotten to his feet, as pale as paper. "Gotthold," he said, "you drive me beyond bounds. Beware, sir, beware!"

"Do you threaten me, friend Otto?" asked the Doctor, grimly. "That would be a strange conclusion."

"When have you ever known me use my power in any private animosity?" cried Otto. "To any private man, your words were an unpardonable insult, but at me you shoot in full security, and I must turn aside to compliment you on your plainness. I must do more than pardon, I must admire, because you have faced this—this formidable monarch, like a Nathan before David. You have uprooted an old kindness, sir, with an unsparing hand. You leave me very bare. My last bond is broken; and though I take Heaven to witness that I sought to do the right, I have this reward: to find myself alone. You say I am no gentleman; yet the sneers have been upon your side; and though I can very well perceive where you have lodged your sympathies, I will forbear the taunt."

"Otto, you are insane?" cried Gotthold, leaping up. "Because I ask you how you came by certain moneys, and because you refuse—"

"Herr von Hohenstockwitz, I have ceased to invite your aid in my affairs," said Otto. "I have heard all that I desire, and you have sufficiently trampled on my vanity. It may be that I can not govern, it may be that I can not love—you tell me so with every mark of honesty; but God has granted me one virtue, and I can still forgive. I forgive you; even in this hour of passion, I can perceive my faults and your excuses; and if I desire that in future I may be spared your conversation, it is not, sir, from resentment—not resentment—but, by Heaven, because no man on earth could endure to be so rated. You have the satisfaction to see your sovereign weep; and that person whom you have so often taunted with his happiness reduced to the last pitch of solitude and misery. No,—I will hear nothing; I claim the last word, sir, as your Prince; and that last word shall be—forgiveness."

And with that Otto was gone from the apartment, and Doctor Gotthold was left alone with the most conflicting sentiments of sorrow, remorse, and merriment; walking to and fro before his table, and asking himself, with hands uplifted, which of the pair of them was most to blame for this unhappy rupture. Presently, he took from a cupboard a bottle of Rhine wine and a goblet of the deep Bohemian ruby. The first glass a little warmed and comforted his bosom; with the second he began to look down upon these troubles from a sunny mountain; yet a while, and filled with this false comfort and contemplating life throughout a golden medium, he owned to himself, with a flush, a smile, and a half-pleasurable sigh, that he had been somewhat overplain in dealing with his cousin. "He said the truth, too," added the penitent librarian, "for in my monkish fashion I adore the Princess." And then, with a still deepening flush and a certain stealth, although he sat all alone in that great gallery, he toasted Seraphina to the dregs.

CHAPTER XI

PROVIDENCE VON ROSEN: ACT THE FIRST: SHE BEGUILES THE BARON

AT A sufficiently late hour, or to be more exact, at three in the afternoon, Madame von Rosen issued on the world. She swept downstairs and out across the garden, a black mantilla thrown over her head, and the long train of her black velvet dress ruthlessly sweeping in the dirt.

At the other end of that long garden, and back to back with the villa of the Countess, stood the large mansion where the Prime Minister transacted his affairs and pleasures. This distance, which was enough for decency by the easy canons of Mittwalden, the Countess swiftly traversed, opened a little door with a key, mounted a flight of stairs, and entered unceremoniously into Gondremark's study. It was a large and very high apartment; books all about the walls, papers on the table, papers on the floor; here and there a picture, somewhat scant of drapery; a great fire glowing and flaming in the blue tiled hearth; and the daylight streaming through a cupola above. In the midst of this sat the great Baron Gondremark in his shirt-sleeves, his business for that day fairly at an end, and the hour arrived for relaxation. His expression, his very nature, seemed to have undergone a fundamental change. Gondremark at home appeared the very antipode of Gondremark on duty. He had an air of massive jollity that well became him; grossness and geniality sat upon his features; and along with his manners, he had laid aside his sly and sinister expression. He lolled there, sunning his bulk before the fire, a noble animal.

"Hey!" he cried. "At last!"

The Countess stepped into the room in silence, threw herself on a chair, and crossed her legs. In her lace and velvet, with a good display of smooth black stocking and of snowy petticoat, and with the refined profile of her face and slender plumpness of her body, she showed in singular contrast to the big, black intellectual satyr by the fire.

"How often do you send for me?" she cried. "It is compromising."

Gondremark laughed. "Speaking of that," said he, "what in the devil's name were you about? You were not home till morning."

"I was giving alms," she said.

The Baron again laughed loud and long, for in his shirt-sleeves he was a very mirthful creature. "It is fortunate I am not jealous," he remarked. "But you know my way: pleasure and liberty go hand in hand. I believe what I believe; it is not much, but I believe it. But now, to business. Have you not read my letter?"

"No," she said, "my head ached."

"Ah well! then I have news indeed!" cried Gondremark. "I was mad to see you all last night and all this morning: for yesterday afternoon I brought my long business to a head; the ship has come home; one more dead lift, and I shall cease to fetch and carry for the Princess Ratafia. Yes, 'tis done. I have the order all in Ratafia's hand; I carry it on my heart. At the hour of twelve to-night, Prince Featherhead is to be taken in his bed and, like the bambino, whipped into a chariot; and by next morning he will command a most romantic prospect from the donjon of the Felsenburg. Farewell, Featherhead! The war goes on, the girl is in my hand; I have long been indispensable, but now I shall be sole. I have long," he added exultingly, "long carried this intrigue upon my shoulders, like Samson with the gates of Gaza; now I discharge that burden."

She had sprung to her feet a little paler. "Is this true?" she cried.

"I tell you a fact," he asseverated. "The trick is played."

"I will never believe it," she said. "An order? In her own hand? I will never believe it, Heinrich."

"I swear to you," said he.

"Oh, what do you care for oaths—or I either? What would you swear by? Wine, women, and song? It is not binding," she said. She had come quite close up to him and laid her hand upon his arm. "As for the order—no, Heinrich, never. I will never believe it. I will die ere I believe it. You have some secret purpose—what, I can not guess—but not one word of it is true."

"Shall I show it you?" he asked.

"You can not," she answered. "There is no such thing."

"Incorrigible Sadducee!" he cried. "Well, I will convert you; you shall see the order." He moved to a chair where he had thrown his coat, and then drawing forth and holding out a paper, "Read," said he.

She took it greedily, and her eye flashed as she perused it.

"Hey!" cried the Baron, "there falls a dynasty, and it was I that felled it; and I and you inherit!" He seemed to swell in stature; and next moment, with a laugh, he put his hand forward. "Give me the dagger," said he.

But she whisked the paper suddenly behind her back and faced him, lowering. "No, no," she said. "You and I have first a point to settle. Do you suppose me blind? She could never have given that paper but to one man, and that man her lover. Here you stand—her lover, her accomplice, her master—Oh, I well believe it, for I know your power. But what am I?" she cried; "I, whom you deceive!"

"Jealousy!" cried Gondremark. "Anna, I would never have believed it! But I declare to you by all that's credible, that I am not her lover. I might be, I suppose; but I never yet durst risk the declaration. The chit is so unreal; a mincing doll; she will and she will not; there is no counting on her, by God! And hitherto I have had my own way without, and keep the lover in reserve. And I say, Anna," he added with severity, "you must break yourself of this new fit, my girl; there must be no combustion. I keep the creature under the belief that I adore her; and if she caught a breath of you and me, she is such a fool, prude, and dog in the manger, that she is capable of spoiling all."

"All very fine," returned the lady. "With whom do you pass your days? and which am I to believe, your words or your actions?"

"Anna, the devil take you, are you blind?" cried Gondremark. "You know me. Am I likely to care for such a *preciosa?* 'Tis hard that we should have been together for so long, and you should still take me for a troubadour. But if there is one thing that I despise and deprecate, it is all such figures in Berlin wool. Give me a human woman —like myself. You are my mate; you were made for me; you amuse me like the play. And what have I to gain that I should pretend to you? If I do not love you, what use are you to me? Why, none. It is as clear as noonday."

"Do you love me, Heinrich?" she asked, languishing. "Do you truly?"

"I tell you," he cried, "I love you next after myself. I should be all abroad if I had lost you."

"Well, then," said she, folding up the paper and putting it calmly in her pocket, "I will believe you, and I join the plot. Count upon me. At midnight, did you say? It is Gordon, I see, that you have charged with it. Excellent; he will stick at nothing."

Gondremark watched her suspiciously. "Why do you take the paper?" he demanded. "Give it here."

"No," she returned; "I mean to keep it. It is I who must prepare the stroke; you can not manage it without me; and to do my best I must possess the paper. Where shall I find Gordon? In his rooms?" She spoke with a rather feverish self-possession.

"Anna," he said sternly, the black, bilious countenance of his palace rôle taking the place of the more open favor of his hours at home, "I ask you for that paper. Once, twice, and thrice."

"Heinrich," she returned, looking him in the face, "take care. I will put up with no dictation."

Both looked dangerous; and the silence lasted for a measurable interval of time. Then she made haste to have the first word; and with a laugh that rang clear and honest, "Do not be a child," she said. "I wonder at you. If your assurances are true, you can have no reason to mistrust me, nor I to play you false. The difficulty is to get the Prince out of the palace without scandal. His valets are devoted; his chamberlain a slave; and yet one cry might ruin all."

"They must be overpowered," he said, following her to the new ground, "and disappear along with him."

"And your whole scheme along with them!" she cried. "He does not take his servants when he goes a-hunting: a child could read the truth. No, no; the plan is idiotic; it must be Ratafia's. But hear me. You know the Prince worships me?"

"I know," he said. "Poor Featherhead, I cross his destiny!"

"Well now," she continued, "what if I bring him alone out of the palace, to some quiet corner of the Park—the Flying Mercury, for instance? Gordon can be posted in the thicket; the carriage wait behind the temple; not a cry, not a scuffle, not a footfall; simply, the Prince vanishes!—What do you say? Am I an able ally? Are my *beaux yeux* of service? Ah, Heinrich, do not lose your Anna!—she has power!"

He struck with his open hand upon the chimney. "Witch!" he said, "there is not your match for devilry in Europe. Service! the thing runs on wheels."

"Kiss me, then, and let me go. I must not miss my Featherhead," she said.

"Stay, stay," said the Baron; "not so fast. I wish, upon my soul, that I could trust you; but you are, out and in, so whimsical a devil that I dare not. Hang it, Anna, no; it's not possible!"

"You doubt me, Heinrich?" she cried.

"Doubt is not the word," said he. "I know you. Once you were clear of me with that paper in your pocket, who knows what you would do with it?—not you, at least—nor I. You see," he added, shaking his head paternally upon the Countess, "you are as vicious as a monkey."

"I swear to you," she cried, "by my salvation . . ."

"I have no curiosity to hear you swearing," said the Baron.

"You think that I have no religion? You suppose me destitute of honor. Well," she said, "see here: I will not argue, but I tell you once for all: leave me this order, and the Prince shall be arrested—take it from me, and, as certain as I speak, I will upset the coach. Trust me, or fear me: take your choice." And she offered him the paper.

The Baron, in a great contention of mind, stood irresolute, weighing the two dangers. Once his hand advanced, then dropped. "Well," he said, "since trust is what you call it . . . ."

"No more," she interrupted. "Do not spoil your attitude. And now since you have behaved like a good sort of fellow in the dark, I will condescend to tell you why. I go to the palace to arrange with Gordon; but how is Gordon to obey me? And how can I foresee the hours? It may be midnight; ay, and it may be nightfall; all's a chance; and to act, I must be free and hold the strings of the adventure. And now," she cried, "your Vivien goes. Dub me your knight!" And she held out her arms and smiled upon him radiant.

"Well," he said, when he had kissed her, "every man must have his folly; I thank God mine is no worse. Off with you! I have given a child a squib."

CHAPTER XII

PROVIDENCE VON ROSEN: ACT THE SECOND: SHE INFORMS THE PRINCE

IT WAS the first impulse of Madame von Rosen to return to her own villa and revise her toilet. Whatever else should come of this adventure, it was her firm design to pay a visit to the Princess. And before that woman, so little beloved, the Countess would appear at no disadvantage. It was the work of minutes. Von Rosen had the captain's eye in matters of the toilet; she was none of those who hang in Fabian helplessness among their finery and, after hours, come forth upon the world as dowdies. A glance, a loosened curl, a studied and admired disorder in the hair, a bit of lace, a touch of color, a yellow rose in the bosom; and the instant picture was complete.

"That will do," she said. "Bid my carriage follow me to the palace. In half an hour it should be there in waiting."

The night was beginning to fall and the shops to shine with lamps along the tree-beshadowed thoroughfares of Otto's capital, when the Countess started on her high emprise. She was jocund at heart; pleasure and interest had winged her beauty, and she knew it. She paused before the glowing jeweler's; she remarked and praised a costume in the milliner's window; and when she reached the lime-tree walk, with its high, umbrageous arches and stir of passers-by in the dim alleys, she took her place upon a bench and began to dally with the pleasures of the hour. It was cold, but she did not feel it, being warm within; her thoughts, in that dark corner, shone like the gold and rubies at the jeweler's; her ears, which heard the brushing of so many footfalls, transposed it into music.

What was she to do? She held the paper by which all depended. Otto and Gondremark and Ratafia, and the state itself, hung light in her balances, as light as dust; her little finger laid in either scale would set all flying: and she hugged herself upon her huge preponderance, and then laughed aloud to think how giddily it might be used. The vertigo of omnipotence, the disease of Cæsars, shook her reason. "Oh, the mad world!" she thought, and laughed aloud in exultation.

A child, finger in mouth, had paused a little way from where she sat, and stared with cloudy interest upon this laughing lady. She called it nearer; but the child hung back. Instantly, with that curious passion which you may see any woman in the world display, on the most odd occasions, for a similar end, the Countess bent herself with singleness of mind to overcome this diffidence; and presently, sure enough, the child was seated on her knee, thumbing and glowering at her watch.

"If you had a clay bear and a china monkey," asked von Rosen, "which would you prefer to break?"

"But I have neither," said the child.

"Well," she said, "here is a bright florin, with which you may purchase both the one and the other; and I shall give it you at once, if you will answer my question. The clay bear or the china monkey—come?"

But the unbreeched soothsayer only stared upon the florin with big eyes; the oracle could not be persuaded to reply; and the Countess kissed him lightly, gave him the florin, set him down upon the path, and resumed her way with swinging and elastic gait.

"Which shall I break?" she wondered; and she passed her hand with delight among the careful disarrangement of her locks. "Which?" and she consulted heaven with her bright eyes. "Do I love both or neither? A little—passionately—not at all? Both or neither—both, I believe; but at least I will make hay of Ratafia."

By the time she had passed the iron gates, mounted the drive, and set her foot upon the broad flagged terrace, the night had come completely; the palace front was thick with lighted windows; and along the balustrade, the lamp on every twentieth baluster shone clear. A few withered tracks of sunset, amber and glow-worm green, still lingered in the western sky; and she paused once again to watch them fading.

"And to think," she said, "that here am I—destiny embodied, a norn, a fate, a providence—and have no guess upon which side I shall declare myself! What other woman in my place would not be prejudiced, and think herself committed? But, thank Heaven! I was born just!" Otto's windows were bright among the rest, and she looked on them with rising tenderness. "How does it feel to be deserted?" she thought. "Poor dear fool! The girl deserves that he should see this order."

Without more delay, she passed into the palace and asked for an audience of Prince Otto. The Prince, she was told, was in his own apartment, and desired to be private. She sent her name. A man presently returned with word that the Prince tendered his apologies, but could see no one. "Then I will write," she said, and scribbled a few lines alleging urgency of life and death. "Help me, my Prince," she added; "none but you can help me." This time the messenger returned more speedily and begged the Countess to follow him: the Prince was graciously pleased to receive the Frau Gräfin von Rosen.

Otto sat by the fire in his large armory, weapons faintly glittering all about him in the changeful light. His face was disfigured by the marks of weeping; he looked sour and sad; nor did he rise to greet his visitor, but bowed, and bade the man begone. That kind of general tenderness which served the Countess for both heart and conscience, sharply smote her at this spectacle of grief and weakness; she began immediately to enter into the spirit of her part; and as soon as they were alone, taking one step forward and with a magnificent gesture—"Up!" she cried.

"Madame von Rosen," replied Otto, dully, "you have used strong words. You speak of life and death. Pray, madam, who is threatened? Who is there," he added bitterly, "so destitute that even Otto of Grünewald can assist him?"

"First learn," said she, "the names of the conspirators: the Princess and the Baron Gondremark. Can you not guess the rest?" And then as he maintained his silence—"You!" she cried, pointing at him with her finger. "'Tis you they threaten! Your rascal and mine have laid their heads together and condemned you. But they reckoned without you and me. We make a *partie carré,* Prince, in love and politics. They lead an ace, but we shall trump it. Come, partner, shall I draw my card?"

"Madam," he said, "explain yourself. Indeed I fail to comprehend."

"See, then," said she; and handed him the order.

He took it, looked upon it with a start; and then, still without speech, he put his hand before his face. She waited for a word in vain.

"What!" she cried, "do you take the thing downheartedly? As well seek wine in a milk-pail as love in that girl's heart! Be done with this, and be a man. After the league of the lions, let us have a conspiracy of mice, and pull this piece of machinery to ground. You were brisk enough last night when nothing was at stake and all was frolic. Well, here is better sport; here is life indeed."

He got to his feet with some alacrity, and his face, which was a little flushed, bore the marks of resolution.

"Madame von Rosen," said he, "I am neither unconscious nor ungrateful; this is the true continuation of your friendship; but I see that I must disappoint your expectations. You seem to expect from me some effort of resistance; but why should I resist? I have not much to gain; and now that I have read this paper, and the last of a fool's paradise is shattered, it would be hyperbolical to speak of loss in the same breath with Otto of Grünewald. I have no party; no policy; no pride, nor anything to be proud of. For what benefit or principle under Heaven do you expect me to contend? Or would you have me bite and scratch like a trapped weasel? No, madam; signify to those who sent you my readiness to go. I would at least avoid a scandal."

"You go?—of your own will, you go?" she cried.

"I can not say so much, perhaps," he answered; "but I go with good alacrity. I have desired a change some time; behold one offered me! Shall I refuse? Thank God, I am not so destitute of humor as to make a tragedy of such a farce." He flicked the order on the table. "You may signify my readiness," he added, grandly.

"Ah," she said, "you are more angry than you own."

"I, madam? angry?" he cried. "You rave. I have no cause for anger. In every way I have been taught my weakness, my instability, and my unfitness for the world. I am a plexus of weaknesses, an impotent Prince, a doubtful gentleman; and you yourself, indulgent as you are, have twice reproved my levity. And shall I be angry? I may feel the unkindness, but I have sufficient honesty of mind to see the reasons of this *coup d'état.*"

"From whom have you got this?" she cried in wonder. "You think you have not behaved well? My Prince, were you not young and handsome, I should detest you for your virtues. You push them to the verge of commonplace. And this ingratitude—"

"Understand me, Madame von Rosen," returned the Prince, flushing a little darker, "there can be here no talk of gratitude, none of pride. You are here, by what circumstance I know not, but doubtless led by your kindness, mixed up in what regards my family alone. You have no knowledge what my wife, your sovereign, may have suffered; it is not for you—no, nor for me—to judge. I own myself in fault; and were it otherwise, a man were a very empty boaster who should talk of love and start before a small humiliation. It is in all the copybooks that one should die to please his lady-love; and shall a man not go to prison?"

"Love? And what has love to do with being sent to jail?" exclaimed the Countess, appealing to the walls and roof. "Heaven knows I think as much of love as any one; my life would prove it; but I admit no love, at least for a man, that is not equally returned. The rest is moonshine."

"I think of love more absolutely, madam, though I am certain no more tenderly, than a lady to whom I am indebted for such kindnesses," returned the Prince. "But this is unavailing. We are not here to hold a court of troubadours."

"Still," she replied, "there is one thing you forget. If she conspires with Gondremark against your liberty, she may conspire with him against your honor also."

"My honor?" he repeated. "For a woman, you surprise me. If I have failed to gain her love or play my part of husband, what right is left me? or what honor can remain in such a scene of defeat? No honor that I recognize. I am become a stranger. If my wife no longer loves me, I will go to prison, since she wills it; if she loves another, where should I be more in place? or whose fault is it but mine? You speak, Madame von Rosen, like too many women, with a man's tongue. Had I myself fallen into temptation (as, Heaven knows, I might) I should have trembled, but still hoped and asked for her forgiveness; and yet mine had been a treason in the teeth of love. But let me tell you, madam," he pursued, with rising irritation, "where a husband by futility, facility, and ill-timed humors has outwearied his wife's patience, I will suffer neither man nor woman to misjudge her. She is free; the man has been found wanting."

"Because she loves you not?" the Countess cried. "You know she is incapable of such a feeling."

"Rather, it was I who was born incapable of inspiring it," said Otto.

Madame von Rosen broke into sudden laughter. "Fool," she cried, "I am in love with you myself."

"Ah, madam, you are most compassionate," the Prince retorted, smiling. "But this is waste debate. I know my purpose. Perhaps to equal you in frankness, I know and embrace my advantage. I am not without the spirit of adventure. I am in a false position—so recognized by public acclamation, do you grudge me, then, my issue?"

"If your mind is made up, why should I dissuade you?" said the Countess. "I own, with a bare face, I am the gainer. Go, you take my heart with you, or more of it than I desire; I shall not sleep at night for thinking of your misery. But do not be afraid; I would not spoil you, you are such a fool and hero."

"Alas! madam," cried the Prince, "and your unlucky money! I did amiss to take it, but you are a wonderful persuader. And I thank God, I can still offer you the fair equivalent." He took some papers from the chimney. "Here, madam, are the title-deeds," he said; "where I am going, they can certainly be of no use to me, and I have now no other hope of making up to you your kindness. You made the loan without formality, obeying your kind heart. The parts are somewhat changed; the sun of this Prince of Grünewald is upon the point of setting; and I know you better than to doubt you will once more waive ceremony, and accept the best that he can give you. If I may look for any pleasure in the coming time, it will be to remember that the peasant is secure, and my most generous friend no loser."

"Do you not understand my odious position?" cried the Countess. "Dear Prince, it is upon your fall that I begin my fortune."

"It was the more like you to tempt me to resistance," returned Otto. "But this can not alter our relations; and I must, for the last time, lay my commands upon you in the character of Prince." And with his loftiest dignity, he forced the deeds on her acceptance.

"I hate the very touch of them," she cried.

There followed upon this a little silence. "At what time," resumed Otto, "if indeed you know, am I to be arrested?"

"Your Highness, when you please!" exclaimed the Countess. "Or if you choose to tear that paper, never!"

"I would rather it were done quickly," said the Prince. "I shall take but time to leave a letter for the Princess."

"Well," said the Countess, "I have advised you to resist; at the same time, if you intend to be dumb before your shearers, I must say that I ought to set about arranging your arrest. I offered"—she hesitated—"I offered to manage it, intending, my dear friend—intending, upon my soul, to be of use to you. Well, if you will not profit by my good will, then be of use to me; and as soon as ever you feel ready, go to the Flying Mercury where we met last night. It will be none the worse for you;

and to make it quite plain, it will be better for the rest of us."

"Dear madam, certainly," said Otto. "If I am prepared for the chief evil, I shall not quarrel with details. Go, then, with my best gratitude; and when I have written a few lines of leave-taking, I shall immediately hasten to keep tryst. To-night, I shall not meet so dangerous a cavalier," he added, with a smiling gallantry.

As soon as Madame von Rosen was gone, he made a great call upon his self-command. He was face to face with a miserable passage where, if it were possible, he desired to carry himself with dignity. As to the main fact, he never swerved or faltered; he had come so heart-sick and so cruelly humiliated from his talk with Gotthold, that he embraced the notion of imprisonment with something bordering on relief. Here was, at least, a step which he thought blameless; here was a way out of his troubles. He sat down to write to Seraphina; and his anger blazed. The tale of his forbearance mounted, in his eyes, to something monstrous; still more monstrous, the coldness, egoism, and cruelty that had required and thus requited them. The pen which he had taken shook in his hand. He was amazed to find his resignation fled, but it was gone beyond his recall. In a few white-hot words, he bade adieu, dubbing desperation by the name of love, and calling his wrath forgiveness; then he cast but one look of leave-taking on the place that had been his for so long and was now to be his no longer; and hurried forth—love's prisoner—or pride's.

He took that private passage which he had trodden so often in less momentous hours. The porter let him out; and the bountiful, cold air of the night and the pure glory of the stars received him on the threshold. He looked round him, breathing deep of earth's plain fragrance; he looked up into the great array of heaven, and was quieted. His little turgid life dwindled to its true proportions; and he saw himself (that great flame-hearted martyr!) stand like a speck under the cool cupola of the night. Thus he felt his careless injuries already soothed; the live air of out-of-doors, the quiet of the world, as if by their silent music, sobering and dwarfing his emotions.

"Well, I forgive her," he said. "If it be of any use to her, I forgive."

And with brisk steps, he crossed the garden, issued upon the Park and came to the Flying Mercury. A dark figure moved forward from the shadow of the pedestal.

"I have to ask your pardon, sir," a voice observed, "but if I am right in taking you for the Prince, I was given to understand that you would be prepared to meet me."

"Herr Gordon, I believe?" said Otto.

"Herr Oberst Gordon," replied that officer. "This is rather a ticklish business for a man to be embarked in; and to find that all is to go pleasantly is a great relief to me. The carriage is at hand; shall I have the honor of following your Highness?"

"Colonel," said the Prince, "I have now come to that happy moment of my life when I have orders to receive but none to give."

"A most philosophical remark!" returned the Colonel. "Begad, a very pertinent remark! it might be Plutarch. I am not a drop's blood to your Highness, or indeed to any one in this principality; or else I should dislike my orders. But as it is, and since there is nothing unnatural or unbecoming on my side, and your Highness takes it in good part, I begin to believe we may have a capital time together, sir—a capital time. For a jailer is only a fellow captive."

"May I inquire, Herr Gordon," asked Otto, "what led you to accept this dangerous and I would fain hope thankless office?"

"Very natural, I am sure," replied the officer of fortune. "My pay is, in the mean while, doubled."

"Well, sir, I will not presume to criticize," returned the Prince. "And I perceive the carriage."

Sure enough, at the intersection of two alleys of the Park, a coach and four, conspicuous by its lanterns, stood in waiting. And a little way off about a score of lancers were drawn up under the shadow of the trees.

CHAPTER XIII

PROVIDENCE VON ROSEN: ACT THE THIRD: SHE ENLIGHTENS SERAPHINA

WHEN Madame von Rosen left the Prince, she hurried straight to Colonel Gordon; and not content with directing arrangements, she had herself accompanied the soldier of fortune to the Flying Mercury. The Colonel gave her his arm, and the talk between this pair of conspirators ran high and lively. The Countess, indeed, was in a whirl of pleasure and excitement; her tongue stumbled upon laughter, her eyes shone, the color that was usually wanting now perfected her face. It would have taken little more to bring Gordon to her feet —or so, at least, she believed, disdaining the idea.

Hidden among some lilac bushes, she enjoyed the great decorum of the arrest, and heard the dialogue of the two men die away along the path. Soon after, the rolling of a carriage and the beat of hoofs arose in the still air of the night, and passed speedily farther and fainter into silence. The Prince was gone.

Madame von Rosen consulted her watch. She had still, she thought, time enough for the titbit of her evening; and hurrying to the palace, winged by the fear of Gondremark's arrival, she sent her name and a pressing request for a reception to the Princess Seraphina. As the Countess von Rosen unqualified, she was sure to be refused; but as an emissary of the Baron's, for so she chose to style herself, she gained immediate entry.

The Princess sat alone at table, making a feint of dining. Her cheeks were mottled, her eyes heavy; she had neither slept nor eaten; even her dress had been neglected. In short, she was out of health, out of looks, out of heart, and hag-ridden by her conscience. The Countess drew a swift comparison, and shone brighter in beauty.

"You come, madam, *de la part de Monsieur le Baron,*" drawled the princess. "Be seated! What have you to say?"

"To say?" repeated Madame von Rosen. "Oh, much to say! Much to say, that I would rather not, and much to leave unsaid that I would rather say. For I am like St. Paul, your Highness, and always wish to do the things I should not. Well! to be categorical—that is the word?—I took the Prince your order. He could not credit his senses. 'Ah,' he cried, 'dear Madame von Rosen, it is not possible—it can not be—I must hear it from your lips. My wife is a poor girl misled, she is only silly, she is not cruel.' *'Mon Prince,'* said I, 'a girl—and therefore cruel; youth kills flies.'—He had such pain to understand it!"

"Madame von Rosen," said the Princess, in most steadfast tones, but with a rose of anger in her face, "who sent you here, and for what purpose? Tell your errand."

"Oh, madam, I believe you understand me very well," returned von Rosen. "I have not your philosophy. I wear my heart upon my sleeve, excuse the indecency! It is a very little one," she laughed, "and I so often change the sleeve!"

"Am I to understand the Prince has been arrested?" asked the Princess, rising.

"While you sat there dining!" cried the Countess, still nonchalantly seated.

"You have discharged your errand," was the reply; "I will not detain you."

"Oh, no, madam," said the Countess, "with your permission, I have not yet done. I have borne much this evening in your service. I have suffered. I was made to suffer in your service." She unfolded her fan as she spoke. Quick as her pulses beat, the fan waved languidly. She betrayed her emotion only by the brightness of her eyes and face, and by the almost insolent triumph with which she looked down upon the Princess. There were old scores of rivalry between them in more than one field; so at least von Rosen felt; and now she was to have her hour of victory in them all.

"You are no servant, Madame von Rosen, of mine," said Seraphina.

"No, madam, indeed," returned the Countess; "but we both serve the same person, as you know—or if you do not, then I have the pleasure of informing you. Your conduct is so light—so light," she repeated, the fan wavering higher like a butterfly, "that perhaps you do not truly understand." The Countess rolled her fan together, laid it in her lap, and rose to a less languorous position. "Indeed," she continued, "I should be sorry to see any young woman in your situation. You began with every advantage—birth, a suitable marriage—quite pretty too—and see what you have come to! My poor girl, to think of it! But there is nothing that does so much harm," observed the Countess finely, "as giddiness of mind." And she once more unfurled the fan, and approvingly fanned herself.

"I will no longer permit you to forget yourself," cried Seraphina. "I think you are mad."

"Not mad," returned von Rosen. "Sane enough to know you dare not break with me to-night, and to profit by the knowledge. I left my poor, pretty Prince Charming crying his eyes out for a wooden doll. My heart is soft; I love my pretty Prince; you will never understand it, but I long to give my Prince his doll, dry his poor eyes, and send him off happy. Oh, you immature fool!" the Countess cried, rising to her feet, and pointing at the Princess the closed fan that now began to tremble in her hand. "Oh wooden doll!" she cried, "have you a heart, or blood, or any nature? This is a man, child—a man who loves you. Oh, it will not happen twice! it is not common; beautiful and clever women look in vain for it. And you, you pitiful schoolgirl, tread this jewel under foot! you, stupid with your vanity! Before you try to govern kingdoms, you should first be able to behave yourself at home; home is the woman's kingdom." She paused and laughed a little, strangely to hear and look upon. "I will tell you one of the things," she said, "that were to stay unspoken. Von Rosen is a better woman than you, my Princess, though you will never have the pain of understanding it; and when I took the Prince your order, and looked upon his face, my soul was melted—oh, I am frank—here, within my arms, I offered him repose!" She advanced a step superbly as she spoke, with outstretched arms; and Seraphina shrank. "Do not be alarmed!" the Countess cried; "I am not offering that hermitage to you; in all the world there is but one who wants to, and him you have dismissed! 'If it will give her pleasure I should wear the martyr's crown,' he cried, 'I will embrace the thorns.' I tell you—I am quite frank—I put the order in his power and begged him to resist. You, who have betrayed your husband, may betray me to Gondremark; my Prince would betray no one. Understand it plainly," she cried, " 'tis of his pure forbearance you sit there; he had the power—I gave it him—to change the parts; and he refused and went to prison in your place."

The Princess spoke with some distress. "Your violence shocks me and pains me," she began, "but I can not be angry with what at least does honor to the mistaken kindness of your heart: it was right for me to know this. I will condescend to tell you. It was with deep regret that I was driven to this step. I admit in many ways the Prince—I admit his amiability. It was our great misfortune, it was perhaps somewhat of my fault, that we were so unsuited to each other; but I have a regard, a sincere regard, for all his qualities. As a private person I should think as you do. It is difficult, I know, to make allowances for state considerations. I have only with deep reluctance obeyed the call of a superior duty; and so soon as I dare do it for the safety of the state, I promise you the Prince shall be released. Many in my situation would have resented your freedoms. I am not—" and she looked for a moment rather piteously upon the Countess—"I am not altogether so inhuman as you think."

"And you can put these troubles of the state," the Countess cried, "to weigh with a man's love?"

"Madame von Rosen, these troubles are affairs of life and death to many; to the Prince, and perhaps even to yourself, among the number," replied the Princess, with dignity. "I have learned, madam, although still so young, in a hard school, that my own feelings must everywhere come last."

"Oh, callow innocence!" exclaimed the other. "Is it possible you do not know, or do not suspect, the intrigue in which you move? I find it in my heart to pity you! We are both women after all—poor girl, poor girl!—and who is born a woman is born a fool. And though I hate all women—come, for the common folly, I forgive you. Your Highness"—she dropped a deep stage courtesy and resumed her fan—"I am going to insult you, to betray one who is called my lover, and if it pleases you to use the power I now put unreservedly into your hands, to ruin my dear self. Oh, what a French comedy! You betray, I betray, they betray. It is now my cue. The letter, yes. Behold the letter, madam, its seal unbroken as I found it by my bed this morning; for I was out of humor, and I get many, too many, of these favors. For your own sake, for the sake of my Prince Charming, for the sake of this great principality that sits so heavy on your conscience, open it and read!"

"Am I to understand," inquired the Princess, "that this letter in any way regards me?"

"You see I have not opened it," replied von Rosen; "but 'tis mine, and I beg you to experiment."

"I can not look at it till you have," returned Seraphina, very seriously. "There may be matter there not meant for me to see; it is a private letter."

The Countess tore it open, glanced it through, and tossed it back; and the Princess, taking up the sheet, recognized the hand of Gondremark, and read with a sickening shock the following lines:—

> "Dearest Anna, come at once. Ratafia has done the deed, her husband to be packed to prison. This puts the minx entirely in my power; *le tour est joué;* she will now go steady in harness, or I will know the reason why. Come.
>
> "HEINRICH."

"Command yourself, madam," said the Countess, watching with some alarm the white face of Seraphina. "It is in vain for you to fight with Gondremark: he has more strings than mere court favor, and could bring you down to-morrow with a word. I would not have betrayed him otherwise; but Heinrich is a man, and plays with all of you like marionettes. And now at least you see for what you sacrificed my Prince. Madam, will you take some wine? I have been cruel."

"Not cruel, madam—salutary," said Seraphina, with a phantom smile. "No, I thank you, I require no attentions. The first surprise affected me: will you give me time a little? I must think."

She took her head between her hands, and contemplated for a while the hurricane confusion of her thoughts.

"This information reaches me," she said, "when I have need of it. I would not do as you have done, but yet I thank you. I have been much deceived in Baron Gondremark."

"Oh, madam, leave Gondremark, and think upon the Prince!" cried von Rosen.

"You speak once more as a private person," said the Princess; "nor do I blame you. But my own thoughts are more distracted. However, as I believe you are truly a friend to my—to the—as I believe," she said, you are a friend to Otto, I shall put the order for his release into your hands this moment. Give me the inkdish. There!" And she wrote hastily, steadying her arm upon the table, for she trembled like a reed. "Remember, madam, "she resumed, handing her the order, "this must not be used nor spoken of at present; till I have seen the Baron, any hurried step—I lose myself in thinking. The suddenness has shaken me."

"I promise you I will not use it," said the Countess, "till you give me leave, although I wish the Prince could be informed of it, to comfort his poor heart. And oh, I had forgotten, he has left a letter. Suffer me, madam; I will bring it you. This is the door, I think?" And she sought to open it.

"The bolt is pushed," said Seraphina, flushing.

"Oh! oh!" cried the Countess.

A silence fell between them.

"I will get it for myself," said Seraphina; "and in the mean while I beg you to leave me. I thank you, I am sure, but I shall be obliged if you will leave me."

The Countess deeply courtesied, and withdrew.

CHAPTER XIV

RELATES THE CAUSE AND OUTBREAK OF THE REVOLUTION

BRAVE as she was, and brave by intellect, the Princess, when first she was alone, clung to the table for support. The four corners of her universe had fallen. She had never liked nor trusted Gondremark completely; she had still held it possible to find him false to friendship; but from that to finding him devoid of all those public virtues for which she had honored him, a mere commonplace intriguer, using her for his own ends, the step was wide and the descent giddy. Light and darkness succeeded each other in her brain; now she believed, and now she could not. She turned, blindly groping for the note. But von Rosen, who had not forgotten to take the warrant from the Prince, had remembered to recover her note from the Princess: von Rosen was an old campaigner, whose most violent emotion aroused rather than clouded the vigor of her reason.

The thought recalled to Seraphina the remembrance of the other letter—Otto's. She rose and went speedily, her brain still wheeling, and burst into the Prince's armory. The old chamberlain was there in waiting; and the sight of another face, prying (or so she felt) on her distress, struck Seraphina into childish anger.

"Go!" she cried; and then, when the old man was already half-way to the door, "Stay!" she added. "As soon as Baron Gondremark arrives, let him attend me here."

"It shall be so directed," said the chamberlain.

"There was a letter . . ." she began, and paused.

"Her Highness," said the chamberlain, "will find a letter on the table. I had received no orders, or her Highness had been spared this trouble."

"No, no, no," she cried. "I thank you. I desire to be alone."

And then, when he was gone, she leaped upon the letter. Her mind was still obscured; like the moon upon a night of clouds and wind, her reason shone and was darkened; and she read the words by flashes.

> "Seraphina," the Prince wrote, "I will write no syllable of reproach. I have seen your order, and I go. What else is left me? I have wasted my love, and have no more. To say that I forgive you is not needful; at least, we are now separate for ever; by your own act, you free me from my willing bondage; I go free to prison. This is the last that you will hear of me in love or anger. I have gone out of your life; you may breathe easy; you have now rid yourself of the husband who allowed you to desert him, of the Prince who gave you his rights, and of the married lover who made it his pride to defend you in your absence. How you have requited him, your own heart more loudly tells you than my words. There is a day coming when your vain dreams will roll away like clouds, and you will find yourself alone. Then you will remember
>
> "Otto."

She read with a great horror on her mind; that day, of which he wrote, was come. She was alone; she had been false, she had been cruel; remorse rolled in upon her; and then with a more piercing note, vanity bounded on the stage of consciousness. She a dupe! she helpless! she to have betrayed herself in seeking to betray her husband! she to have lived these years upon flattery, grossly swallowing the bolus, like a clown with sharpers! she—Seraphina! Her swift mind drank the consequences; she foresaw the coming fall, her public shame; she saw the odium, disgrace, and folly of her story flaunt through Europe. She recalled the scandal she had so royally braved; and alas! she had now no courage to confront it with. To be thought the mistress of that man: perhaps for that . . . She closed her eyes on agonizing vistas. Swift as thought she had snatched a bright dagger from the weapons that shone along the wall. Ay, she would escape. From that world-wide theater of nodding heads and buzzing whisperers, in which she now beheld herself unpitiably martyred, one door stood open. At any cost, through any stress of suffering, that greasy laughter should be stifled. She closed her eyes, breathed a wordless prayer, and pressed the weapon to her bosom.

At the astonishing sharpness of the prick, she gave a cry and awoke to a sense of undeserved escape. A little ruby spot of blood was the reward of that great act of desperation; but the pain had braced her like a tonic, and her whole design of suicide had passed away.

At the same instant regular feet drew near along the gallery, and she knew the tread of the big Baron, so often gladly welcome, and even now rallying her spirits like a call to battle. She concealed the dagger in the folds of her skirt; and drawing her stature up, she stood firm-footed, radiant with anger, waiting for the foe.

The Baron was announced, and entered. To him, Seraphina was a hated task: like a schoolboy with his Virgil, he had neither will nor leisure to remark her beauties; but when he now beheld her standing illuminated by her passion, new feelings flashed upon him, a frank admiration, a brief sparkle of desire. He noted both with joy; they were means. "If I have to play the lover," thought he, for that was his constant preoccupation, "I believe I can put soul into it." Meanwhile, with his usual ponderous grace, he bent before the lady.

"I propose," she said in a strange voice, not known to her till then, "that we release the Prince and do not prosecute the war."

"Ah, madam," he replied, " 'tis as I knew it would be! Your heart, I knew, would wound you when we came to this distasteful but most necessary step. Ah, madam, believe me, I am not unworthy to be your ally; I know you have qualities to which I am a stranger, and count them the best weapons in the armory of our alliance:—the girl in the queen—pity, love, tenderness, laughter; the smile that can reward. I can only command; I am the frowner. But you! And you have the fortitude to command these comely weaknesses, to tread them down at the call of reason. How often have I not admired it even to yourself! Ay, even to yourself," he added tenderly, dwelling, it seemed, in memory on hours of more private admiration. "But now, madam—"

"But now, Herr von Gondremark, the time for these declarations has gone by," she cried. "Are you true to me? are you false? Look in your heart and answer: it is your heart I want to know."

"It has come," thought Gondremark. "You, madam!" he cried, starting back—with fear, you would have said, and yet a timid joy. "You! yourself, you bid me look into my heart?"

"Do you suppose I fear?" she cried, and looked at him with such a heightened color, such bright eyes, and a smile of so abstruse a meaning, that the Baron discarded his last doubt.

"Ah, madam!" he cried, plumping on his knees. "Seraphina! Do you permit me? have you divined my secret? It is true, I put my life with joy into your power—I love you, love with ardor, as an equal, as a mistress, as a brother-in-arms, as an adored, desired, sweet-hearted woman. Oh, bride!" he cried, waxing dithyrambic, "bride of my reason and my senses, have pity, have pity on my love!"

She heard him with wonder, rage, and then contempt. His words offended her to sickness; his appearance, as he groveled bulkily upon the floor, moved her to such laughter as we laugh in nightmares.

"Oh, shame!" she cried. "Absurd and odious! What would the Countess say?"

That great Baron Gondremark, the excellent politician, remained for some little time upon his knees in a frame of mind which perhaps we are allowed to pity. His vanity, within his iron bosom, bled and raved. If he could have blotted all, if he could have withdrawn part, if he had not called her bride—with a roaring in his ears, he thus regretfully reviewed his declaration. He got to his feet tottering; and then, in that first moment when a dumb agony finds a vent in words, and the tongue betrays the inmost and worst of a man, he permitted himself a retort which, for six weeks to follow, he was to repent at leisure.

"Ah," said he, "the Countess? Now I perceive the reason of your Highness's disorder."

The lackey-like insolence of the words was driven home by a more insolent manner. There fell upon Seraphina one of those storm-clouds which had already blackened upon her reason; she heard herself cry out; and when the cloud dispersed, flung the blood-stained dagger on the floor, and saw Gondremark reeling back with open mouth and clapping his hand upon the wound. The next moment, with oaths that she had never heard, he leaped at her in savage passion; clutched her as she recoiled; and in the very act, stumbled and drooped. She had scarce time to fear his murderous onslaught ere he fell before her feet.

He rose upon one elbow; she still staring upon him, white with horror.

"Anna!" he cried, "Anna! Help!"

And then his utterance failed him, and he fell back, to all appearance dead.

Seraphina ran to and fro in the room; she wrung her hands and cried aloud; within she was all one uproar of terror, and conscious of no articulate wish but to awake.

There came a knocking at the door; and she sprang to it and held it, panting like a beast, and with the strength of madness in her arms, till she had pushed the bolt. At this success a certain calm fell upon her reason. She went back and looked upon her victim, the knocking growing louder. Oh, yes, he was dead. She had killed him. He had called upon von Rosen with his latest breath; ah! who would call on Seraphina? She had killed him. She, whose irresolute hand could scarce prick blood from her own bosom, had found strength to cast that great colossus at a blow.

All this while the knocking was growing more uproarious and more unlike the staid career of life in such a palace. Scandal was at the door, with what a fatal following she dreaded to conceive; and at the same time among the voices that now began to summon her by name she recognized the Chancellor's. He or another, somebody must be the first.

"Is Herr von Greisengesang without?" she called.

"Your Highness—yes!" the old gentleman answered. "We have heard cries, a fall. Is anything amiss?"

"Nothing," replied Seraphina. "I desire to speak with you. Send off the rest." She panted between each phrase; but her mind was clear. She let the looped curtain down upon both sides before she drew the bolt; and, thus secure from any sudden eyeshot from without, admitted the obsequious Chancellor and again made fast the door.

Greisengesang clumsily revolved among the wings of the curtain; so that she was clear of it as soon as he.

"My God!" he cried. "The Baron!"

"I have killed him," she said. "Oh, killed him!"

"Dear me," said the old gentleman, "this is most unprecedented. Lovers' quarrels," he added ruefully, "*redintegratio—*" and then paused. "But, my dear madam," he broke out again, "in the name of all that is practical, what are we to do? This is exceedingly grave; morally, madam, it is appalling. I take the liberty, your Highness, for one moment, of addressing you as a daughter, a loved although respected daughter; and I must say that I can not conceal from you that this is morally most questionable. And, oh dear me, we have a dead body!"

She had watched him closely; hope fell to contempt; she drew away her skirts from his weakness, and, in the act, her own strength returned to her.

"See if he be dead," she said; not one word of explanation or defense; she had scorned to justify herself before so poor a creature: "See if he be dead" was all.

With the greatest compunction, the Chancellor drew near; and as he did so the wounded Baron rolled his eyes.

"He lives," cried the old courtier, turning effusively to Seraphina. "Madam, he still lives."

"Help him, then," returned the Princess, standing fixed. "Bind up his wound."

"Madam, I have no means," protested the Chancellor.

"Can you not take your handkerchief, your neckcloth, anything?" she cried; and at the same moment, from her light muslin gown she rent off a flounce and tossed it on the floor. "Take that," she said, and for the first time directly faced Greisengesang.

But the Chancellor held up his hands and turned away his head in agony. The grasp of the falling Baron had torn down the dainty fabric of the bodice; and—"Oh

Highness!" cried Greisengesang, appalled, "the terrible disorder of your toilet!"

"Take up that flounce," she said; "the man may die."

Greisengesang turned in a flutter to the Baron, and attempted some innocent and bungling measures. "He still breathes," he kept saying. "All is not yet over; he is not yet gone."

"And now," said she, "if that is all you can do, be gone and get some porters; he must instantly go home."

"Madam," cried the Chancellor, "if this most melancholy sight were seen in town—oh dear, the State would fall!" he piped.

"There is a litter in the Palace," she replied. "It is your part to see him safe. I lay commands upon you. On your life it stands."

"I see it, dear Highness," he jerked. "Clearly I see it. But how? what men? The Prince's servants—yes. They had a personal affection. They will be true, if any."

"Oh, not them!" she cried. "Take Sabra, my own man."

"Sabra! The grand-mason?" returned the Chancellor, aghast. "If he but saw this, he would sound the tocsin—we should all be butchered."

She measured the depth of her abasement steadily. "Take whom you must," she said, "and bring the litter here."

Once she was alone she ran to the Baron, and with a sickening heart sought to ally the flux of blood. The touch of the skin of that great charlatan revolted her to the toes; the wound, in her ignorant eyes, looked deathly; yet she contended with her shuddering, and, with more skill at least than the Chancellor's, stanched the welling injury. An eye unprejudiced with hate would have admired the Baron in his swoon; he looked so great and shapely; it was so powerful a machine that lay arrested; and his features, cleared for the moment both of temper and dissimulation, were seen to be so purely modeled. But it was not thus with Seraphina. Her victim, as he lay outspread, twitching a little, his big chest unbared, fixed her with his ugliness; and her mind flitted for a glimpse to Otto.

Rumors began to sound about the Palace of feet running and of voices raised; the echoes of the great arched staircase were voluble of some confusion; and then the gallery jarred with a quick and heavy tramp. It was the Chancellor, followed by four of Otto's valets and a litter. The servants, when they were admitted, stared at the disheveled Princess and the wounded man; speech was denied them, but their thoughts were riddled with profanity. Gondremark was bundled in; the curtains of the litter were lowered; the bearers carried it forth, and the Chancellor followed behind with a white face.

Seraphina ran to the window. Pressing her face upon the pane, she could see the terrace, where the lights contended; thence, the avenue of lamps that joined the Palace and town; and overhead the hollow night and the larger stars. Presently the small procession issued from the Palace, crossed the parade, and began to thread the glittering alley: the swinging couch with its four porters, the much-pondering Chancellor behind. She watched them dwindle with strange thoughts: her eyes fixed upon the scene, her mind still glancing right and left on the overthrow of her life and hopes. There was no one left in whom she might confide; none whose hand was friendly, or on whom she dared to reckon for the barest loyalty. With the fall of Gondremark her party, her brief popularity, had fallen. So she sat crouched upon the window seat, her brow to the cool pane; her dress in tatters, barely shielding her; her mind revolving bitter thoughts.

Meanwhile, consequences were fast mounting; and in the deceptive quiet of the night, downfall and red revolt were brewing. The litter had passed forth between the iron gates and entered on the streets of the town. By what flying panic, by what thrill of air communicated, who shall say? but the passing bustle in the Palace had already reached and reechoed in the region of the burghers. Rumor, with her loud whisper, hissed about the town; men left their homes without knowing why; knots formed along the boulevard; under the rare lamps and the great limes the crowd grew blacker.

And now through the midst of that expectant company, the unusual sight of a closed litter was observed approaching, and trotting hard behind it that great dignitary Cancellarius Greisengesang. Silence looked on as it went by; and as soon as it was passed, the whispering seethed over like a boiling pot. The knots were sundered; and gradually, one following another, the whole mob began to form into a procession and escort the curtained litter. Soon spokesmen, a little bolder than their mates, began to ply the Chancellor with questions. Never had he more need of that great art of falsehood, by whose exercise he had so richly lived. And yet now he stumbled, the master passion, fear, betraying him. He was pressed; he became incoherent; and then from the jolting litter came a groan. In the instant hubbub and the gathering of the crowd as to a natural signal, the clear-eyed quavering Chancellor heard the catch of the clock before it strikes the hour of doom; and for ten seconds he forgot himself. This shall atone for many sins. He plucked a bearer by the sleeve. "Bid the Princess flee. All is lost," he whispered. And the next moment he was babbling for his life among the multitude.

Five minutes later the wild-eyed servant burst into the armory. "All is lost!" he cried. "The chancellor bids you flee." And at the same time, looking through the window, Seraphina saw the black rush of the populace begin to invade the lamplit avenue.

"Thank you, Georg," she said. "I thank you. Go." And as the man still lingered, "I bid you go," she added. "Save yourself."

Down by the private passage, and just some two hours later, Amalia Seraphina, the last Princess, followed Otto Johann Friedrich, the last Prince of Grünewald.

PART III

FORTUNATE MISFORTUNE

CHAPTER I

PRINCESS CINDERELLA

THE porter, drawn by the growing turmoil, had vanished from the postern, and the door stood open on the darkness of the night. As Seraphina fled up the terraces, the cries and loud footing of the mob drew nearer the doomed palace; the rush was like the rush of cavalry; the sound of shattering lamps tingled above the rest; and overtowering all, she heard her own name bandied among the shouters. A bugle sounded at the door of the guard-room; one gun was fired; and then with the yell of hundreds, Mittwalden Palace was carried at a rush.

Sped by these dire sounds and voices, the Princess scaled the long garden, skimming like a bird the starlit stairways; crossed the Park, which was in that place narrow; and plunged upon the farther side into the rude shelter of the forest. So, at a bound, she left the discretion and the cheerful lamps of Palace evenings; ceased utterly to be a sovereign lady; and, falling from the whole height of civilization, ran forth into the woods, a ragged Cinderella.

She went direct before her through an open tract of the forest, full of brush and birches, and where the starlight guided her; and beyond that again, must thread the columned blackness of a pine grove joining overhead the thatch of its long branches. At that hour, the place was breathless; a horror of night like a presence occupied that dungeon of the wood; and she went groping, knocking against the boles—her ear, betweenwhiles, strained to aching and yet unrewarded.

But the slope of the ground was upward, and encouraged her; and presently she issued on a rocky hill that stood forth above the sea of forest. All around were other hilltops, big and little; sable vales of forest between; overhead the open heaven and the brilliancy of countless stars; and along the western sky the dim forms of mountains. The glory of the great night laid hold upon her; her eyes shone with stars; she dipped her sight into the coolness and brightness of the sky, as she might have dipped her wrist into a spring; and her heart, at that ethereal shock, began to move more soberly. The sun that sails overhead, plowing into gold the fields of daylight azure and uttering the signal to man's myriads, has no word apart for man the individual; and the moon, like a violin, only praises and laments our private destiny. The stars alone, cheerful whisperers, confer quietly with each of us like friends; they give ear to our sorrows smilingly, like wise old men, rich in tolerance; and by their double scale, so small to the eye, so vast to the imagination, they keep before the mind the double character of man's nature and fate.

There sate the Princess, beautifully looking upon beauty, in council with these glad advisers. Bright like pictures, clear like a voice in the porches of her ear, memory reenacted the tumult of the evening: The Countess and the dancing fan, the big Baron on his knees, the blood on the polished floor, the knocking, the swing of the litter down the avenue of lamps, the messenger, the cries of the charging mob; and yet all were far away and phantasmal, and she was still healingly conscious of the peace and glory of the night. She looked toward Mittwalden; and above the hilltop, which already hid it from her view, a throbbing redness hinted of fire. Better so: better so, that she should fall with tragic greatness, lit by a blazing palace! She felt not a trace of pity for Gondremark or of concern for Grünewald: that period of her life was closed for ever, a wrench of wounded vanity alone surviving. She had but one clear idea: to flee—and another, obscure and half-rejected, although still obeyed: to flee in the direction of the Felsenburg. She had a duty to perform, she must free Otto—so her mind said, very coldly; but her heart embraced the notion of that duty even with ardor, and her hands began to yearn for the grasp of kindness.

She rose, with a start of recollection, and plunged down the slope into the covert. The woods received and closed upon her. Once more, she wandered and hasted in a blot, uncheered, unpiloted. Here and there, indeed, through rents in the wood-roof, a glimmer attracted her; here and there, a tree stood out among its neighbors by some force of outline; here and there, a brushing among the leaves, a notable blackness, a dim shine, relieved, only to exaggerate, the solid oppression of the night and silence. And betweenwhiles, the unfeatured darkness would redouble and the whole ear of night appear to be gloating on her steps. Now she would stand still, and the silence would grow and grow, till it weighed upon her breathing; and then she would address herself again to run, stumbling, falling, and still hurrying the more. And presently the whole wood rocked and began to run along with her. The noise of her own mad passage through the silence spread and echoed, and filled the night with terror. Panic hunted her: Panic from the trees reached forth with clutching branches; the darkness was lit up and peopled with strange forms and faces. She strangled and fled before her fears. And yet in the last fortress, reason, blown upon by these gusts of terror, still shone with a troubled light. She knew, yet could not act upon her knowledge; she knew that she must stop, and yet she still ran.

She was already near madness, when she broke suddenly into a narrow clearing. At the same time the din grew louder, and she became conscious of vague forms and fields of whiteness. And with that the earth gave way; she fell and found her feet again with an incredible shock to her senses, and her mind was swallowed up.

When she came again to herself, she was standing to the midleg in an icy eddy of a brook, and leaning with one hand on the rock from which it poured. The spray had wet her hair. She saw the white cascade, the stars wavering in the shaken pool, foam flitting, and high overhead the tall pines on either hand serenely drinking starshine; and in the sudden quiet of her spirit, she heard with joy the firm plunge of the cataract in the pool. She scrambled forth dripping. In the face of her proved weakness, to adventure again upon the horror of blackness in the groves were a suicide of life or reason. But here, in the alley of the brook, with the kind stars above her, and the moon presently swimming into sight, she could await the coming of day without alarm.

This lane of pine-trees ran very rapidly down hill and wound among the woods; but it was a wider thoroughfare than the brook needed, and here and there were little dimpling lawns and coves of the forest, where the starshine slumbered. Such a lawn she paced, taking patience bravely; and now she looked up the hill and saw the brook coming down to her in a series of cascades; and now approached the margin, where it welled among the rushes silently; and now gazed at the great company of heaven with an enduring wonder. The early evening had fallen chill, but the night was now temperate; out of the recesses of the wood there came mild airs as from a deep and peaceful breathing; and the dew was heavy on the grass and the tight-shut daisies. This was the girl's first night under the naked heaven; and now that her fears were overpassed, she was touched to the soul by its serene amenity and peace. Kindly the host of heaven blinked down upon that wandering Princess; and the honest brook had no words but to encourage her.

At last she began to be aware of a wonderful revolution, compared to which the fire of Mittwalden Palace was but the crack and flash of a percussion cap. The countenance with which the pines regarded her began insensibly to change; the grass too, short as it was, and the whole winding staircase of the brook's course, began to wear a solemn freshness of appearance. And this slow transfiguration reached her heart, and played upon it, and transpierced it with a serious thrill. She looked all about; the whole face of nature looked back, brimful of meaning, finger on lip, leaking its glad secret. She looked up. Heaven was almost emptied of stars. Such as still lingered shone with a changed and waning brightness, and began to faint in their stations. And the color of the sky itself was the most wonderful; for the rich blue of the night had now melted and softened and brightened; and there had succeeded in its place a hue that has no name, and that is never seen but as the herald of morning. "Oh!" she cried, joy catching at her voice, "oh! it is the dawn!"

In a breath she passed over the brook, and looped up her skirts and fairly ran in the dim alleys. As she ran, her ears were aware of many pipings, more beautiful than music; in the small dish-shaped houses in the fork of giant arms, where they had lain all night, lover by lover, warmly pressed, the bright-eyed, big-hearted singers began to awaken for the day. Her heart melted and flowed forth to them in kindness. And they, from their small and high perches in the clerestories of the wood cathedral, peered down sidelong at the ragged Princess as she flitted below them on the carpet of the moss and tassel.

Soon she had struggled to a certain hilltop, and saw far before her the silent inflooding of the day. Out of the east it welled and whitened; the darkness trembled into light; and the stars were extinguished like the street-lamps of a human city. The whiteness brightened into silver, the silver warmed into gold, the gold kindled into pure and living fire; and the face of the east was barred with elemental scarlet. The day drew its first long breath, steady and chill; and for leagues around the woods sighed and shivered. And then, at one bound, the sun had floated up; and her startled eyes received day's first arrow, and quailed under the buffet. On every side, the shadows leaped from their ambush and fell prone. The day was come, plain and garish; and up the steep and solitary eastern heaven, the sun, victorious over his competitors, continued slowly and royally to mount.

Seraphina drooped for a little, leaning on a pine, the shrill joy of the woodlands mocking her. The shelter of the night, the thrilling and joyous changes of the dawn, were over; and now, in the hot eye of the day, she turned uneasily and looked sighingly about her. Some way off among the lower woods, a pillar of smoke was mounting and melting in the gold and blue. There, surely enough, were human folk, the hearth-surrounders. Man's fingers had laid the twigs: it was man's breath that had quickened and encouraged the baby flames; and now, as the fire caught, it would be playing ruddily on the face of its creator. At the thought, she felt a-cold and little and lost in that great out-of-doors. The electric shock of the young sunbeams and the unhuman beauty of the woods began to irk and daunt her. The covert of the house, the decent privacy of rooms, the swept and regulated fire, all that denotes or beautifies the home life of man, began to draw her as with cords. The pillar of smoke was now risen into some stream of moving air; it began to lean out sideways in a pennon; and thereupon, as though the change had been a summons, Seraphina plunged once more into the labyrinth of the wood.

She left day upon the high ground. In the lower groves there still lingered the blue early twilight and the seizing freshness of the dew. But here and there, above this field of shadow, the head of a great outspread pine was already glorious with day; and here and there, through the breaches of the hills, the sunbeams made a great and luminous entry. Here Seraphina hastened along forest paths. She had lost sight of the pilot smoke, which blew another way, and conducted herself in that great wilderness by the direction of the sun. But presently fresh signs bespoke the neighborhood of man; felled trunks, white slivers from the ax, bundles of green boughs, and stacks of firewood. These guided her forward; until she came forth at last upon the clearing whence the smoke arose. A hut stood in the clear shadow, hard by a brook which made a series of inconsiderable falls; and on the threshold, the Princess saw a sunburnt and hard-featured woodman, standing with his hands behind his back and gazing skyward.

She went to him directly: a beautiful, bright-eyed, and haggard vision; splendidly arrayed and pitifully tattered; the diamond ear-drops still glittering in her ears; and with the movement of her coming, one small breast showing and hiding among the ragged covert of the laces. At that ambiguous hour, and coming as she did from the great silence of the forest, the man drew back from the Princess as from something elfin.

"I am cold," she said, "and weary. Let me rest beside your fire."

The woodman was visibly commoved, but answered nothing.

"I will pay," she said, and then repented of the words, catching perhaps a spark of terror from his frightened eyes. But, as usual, her courage rekindled brighter for the check. She put him from the door and entered; and he followed her in superstitious wonder.

Within, the hut was rough and dark; but on the stone that served as hearth, twigs and a few dry branches burned with the brisk sounds and all the variable beauty of fire. The very sight of it composed her; she crouched hard by on the earth floor and shivered in the glow, and looked upon the eating blaze with admiration. The woodman was still staring at his guest: at the wreck of the rich dress, the bare arms, the bedraggled laces and the gems. He found no word to utter.

"Give me food," said she,—"here, by the fire."

He set down a pitcher of coarse wine, bread, a piece of cheese, and a handful of raw onions. The bread was hard and sour, the cheese like leather; even the onion, which ranks with the truffle and the nectarine in the chief place of honor of earth's fruits, is not perhaps a dish for princesses when raw. But she ate, if not with appetite, with courage; and when she had eaten, did not disdain the pitcher. In all her life before, she had not tasted of gross food nor drunk after another; but a brave woman far more readily accepts a change of circumstances than the bravest man. All that while, the woodman continued to observe her furtively, many low thoughts of fear and greed contending in his eyes. She read them clearly, and she knew she must begone.

Presently she arose and offered him a florin.

"Will that repay you?" she asked.

But here the man found his tongue. "I must have more than that," said he.

"It is all I have to give you," she returned, and passed him by serenely.

Yet her heart trembled, for she saw his hand stretched forth as if to arrest her, and his unsteady eyes wandering to his ax. A beaten path led westward from the clearing, and she swiftly followed it. She did not glance behind her. But as soon as the least turning of the path had concealed her from the woodman's eyes, she slipped among the trees and ran till she deemed herself in safety.

By this time the strong sunshine pierced in a thousand places the pine-thatch of the forest, fired the red boles, irradiated the cool aisles of shadow, and burned in jewels on the grass. The gum of these trees was dearer to the senses than the gums of Araby; each pine, in the lusty morning sunlight, burned its own wood-incense; and now and then a breeze would rise and toss these rooted censers, and send shade and sun-gem flitting, swift as swallows, thick as bees; and wake a brushing bustle of sounds that murmured and went by.

On she passed and up and down, in sun and shadow; now aloft on the bare ridge among the rocks and birches, with the lizards and the snakes; and anon in the deep grove among sunless pillars. Now she followed wandering woodpaths, in the maze of valleys; and again, from a hilltop, beheld the distant mountains and the great birds circling under the sky. She would see afar off a nestling hamlet, and go round to avoid it. Below, she traced the course of the foam of mountain torrents. Nearer hand, she saw where the tender springs welled up in silence, or oozed in green moss; or in the more favored hollows a whole family of infant rivers would combine, and tinkle in the stones, and lie in pools to be a bathing-place for sparrows, or fall from the sheer rock in rods of crystal. Upon all these things, as she still sped along in the bright air, she looked with a rapture of surprise and a joyful fainting of the heart; they seemed so novel, they touched so strangely home, they were so hued and scented, they were so beset and canopied by the dome of the blue air of heaven.

At length, when she was well weary, she came upon a wide and shallow pool. Stones stood in it, like islands; bullrushes fringed the coast; the floor was paved with the pine needles, and the pines themselves, whose roots made promontories, looked down silently on their green images. She crept to the margin and beheld herself with wonder, a hollow and bright-eyed phantom, in the ruins of her palace robe. The breeze now shook her image; now it would be marred with flies; and at that she smiled; and from the fading circles, her counterpart smiled back at her and looked kind. She sat long in the warm sun, and pitied her bare arms that were all bruised and marred with falling, and marveled to see that she was dirty, and could not grow to believe that she had gone so long in such a strange disorder.

Then, with a sigh, she addressed herself to make a toilet by that forest mirror, washed herself pure from all the stains of her adventure, took off her jewels and wrapped them in her handkerchief, rearranged the tatters of her dress, and took down the folds of her hair. She shook it round her face, and the pool repeated her thus veiled. Her hair had smelt like violets, she remembered Otto saying; and so now she tried to smell it, and then shook her head, and laughed a little, sadly, to herself.

The laugh was echoed upon her in a childish echo. She looked up; and lo! two children looking on,—a small girl and a yet smaller boy, standing, like playthings, by the pool, below a spreading pine. Seraphina was not fond of children, and now she was startled to the heart.

"Who are you?" she cried, hoarsely.

The mites huddled together and drew back; and Seraphina's heart reproached her that she should have frightened things so quaint and little, and yet alive with senses. She thought upon the birds and looked again at her two visitors; so little larger and so far more innocent. On their clear faces, as in a pool, she saw the reflection of their fears. With gracious purpose she arose.

"Come," she said, "do not be afraid of me," and took a step toward them.

But alas! at the first movement, the two poor babes in the wood turned and ran helter-skelter from the Princess.

The most desolate pang was struck into the girl's heart. Here she was, twenty-two—soon twenty-three—and not a creature loved her; none but Otto; and would even he forgive? If she began weeping in these woods alone, it would mean death or madness. Hastily she trod the thoughts out like a burning paper; hastily rolled up her locks, and with terror dogging her, and her whole bosom sick with grief, resumed her journey.

Past ten in the forenoon, she struck a highroad, marching in that place uphill between two stately groves, a river of sunlight; and here, dead weary, careless of consequences, and taking some courage from the human and civilized neighborhood of the road, she stretched herself on the green margin in the shadow of a tree. Sleep closed on her, at first with a horror of fainting, but when she ceased to struggle, kindly embracing her. So she was taken home for a little, from all her toils and sorrows, to her Father's arms. And there in the mean while her body lay exposed by the highwayside, in tattered finery; and on either hand from the woods the birds came flying by and calling upon others, and debated in their own tongue this strange appearance.

The sun pursued his journey; the shadow flitted from her feet, shrank higher and higher, and was upon the point of leaving her altogether, when the rumble of a coach was signaled to and fro by the birds. The road in that part was very steep; the rumble drew near with great deliberation; and ten minutes passed before a gentleman appeared, walking with a sober elderly gait upon the grassy margin of the highway, and looking pleasantly around him as he walked. From time to time he paused, took out his note-book and made an entry with a pencil; and any spy who had been near enough would have heard him mumbling words as though he were a poet testing verses. The voice of the wheels was still faint, and it was plain the traveler had far outstripped his carriage.

He had drawn very near to where the Princess lay asleep, before his eye alighted on her; but when it did he started, pocketed his note-book, and approached. There was a milestone close to where she lay; and he sat down on that and coolly studied her. She lay upon one side, all curled and sunken, her brow on one bare arm, the other stretched out, limp and dimpled. Her young body, like a thing thrown down, had scarce a mark of life. Her breathing stirred her not. The deadliest fatigue was thus confessed in every language of the sleeping flesh. The traveler smiled grimly. As though he had looked upon a statue, he made a grudging inventory of her charms: the figure in that touching freedom of forgetfulness surprised him; the flush of slumber became her like a flower.

"Upon my word," he thought, "I did not think the girl could be so pretty. And to think," he added, "that I am under obligation not to use one word of this!"

He put forth his stick and touched her; and at that she awoke, sat up with a cry, and looked upon him wildly.

"I trust your Highness has slept well," he said, nodding.

But she only uttered sounds.

"Compose yourself," said he, giving her certainly a brave example in his own demeanor. "My chaise is close at hand; and I shall have, I trust, the singular entertainment of abducting a sovereign Princess."

"Sir John!" she said, at last.

"At your Highness's disposal," he replied.

She sprang to her feet. "Oh," she cried, "have you come from Mittwalden?"

"This morning," he returned, "I left it; and if there is any one less likely to return to it than yourself, behold him!"—"The Baron—" she began, and paused.

"Madam," he answered, "it was well meant, and you are quite a Judith; but after the hours that have elapsed, you will probably be relieved to hear that he is fairly well. I took his news this morning ere I left. Doing fairly well, they said, but suffering acutely. Hey?—acutely. They could hear his groans in the next room."

"And the Prince," she asked, "is anything known of him?"

"It is reported," replied Sir John, with the same pleasurable deliberation, "that upon that point your Highness is the best authority."

"Sir John," she said eagerly, "you were generous enough to speak about your carriage. Will you, I beseech you, will you take me to the Felsenburg? I have business there of an extreme importance."

"I can refuse you nothing," replied the old gentleman, gravely and seriously enough. "Whatever, madam, it is in my power to do for you, that shall be done with pleasure. As soon as my chaise shall overtake us, it is yours to carry you where you will. But," added he, reverting to his former manner, "I observe you ask me nothing of the Palace."

"I do not care," she said. "I thought I saw it burning."

"Prodigious!" said the Baronet. "You thought? And can the loss of forty toilets leave you cold? Well, madam, I admire your fortitude. And the state, too? As I left, the government was sitting,—the new government, of which at least two members must be known to you by name: Sabra, who had, I believe, the benefit of being formed in your employment—a footman,—am I right?—and our old friend the Chancellor, in something of a subaltern position. But in these convulsions, the last shall be first and the first last."

"Sir John," she said, with an air of perfect honesty, "I am sure you mean most kindly, but these matters have no interest for me."

The Baronet was so utterly discountenanced, that he hailed the appearance of his chaise with welcome, and, by way of saying something, proposed that they should walk back to meet it. So it was done; and he helped her in with courtesy, mounted to her side, and from various receptacles (for the chaise was most completely fitted out) produced fruits and truffled liver, beautiful white bread, and a bottle of delicate wine. With these he served her like a father, coaxing and praising her to fresh exertions; and during all that time, as though silenced by the laws of hospitality, he was not guilty of the shadow of a sneer. Indeed his kindness seemed so genuine that Seraphina was moved to gratitude. "Sir John," she said, "you hate me in your heart; why are you so kind to me?"

"Ah, my good lady," said he, with no disclaimer of the accusation, "I have the honor to be much your husband's friend, and somewhat his admirer."

"You!" she cried. "They told me you wrote cruelly of both of us."

"Such was the strange path by which we grew acquainted," said Sir John. "I had written, madam, with particular cruelty (since that shall be the phrase) of your fair self. Your husband set me at liberty, gave me a passport, ordered a carriage, and then, with the most boyish spirit, challenged me to fight. Knowing the nature of his married life, I thought the dash and loyalty he showed delightful. 'Do not be afraid,' says he; 'if I am killed, there is nobody to miss me.' It appears you subsequently thought of that yourself. But I digress. I explained to him it was impossible that I could fight! 'Not if I strike you?' says he. Very droll; I wish I could have put it in my book. However, I was conquered, took the young gentleman to my high favor, and tore up my bits of scandal on the spot. That is one of the little favors, madam, that you owe your husband."

Seraphina sat for some while in silence. She could bear to be misjudged without a pang by those whom she contemned; she had none of Otto's eagerness to be approved, but went her own way straight and head in air. To Sir John, however, after what he had said, and as her husband's friend, she was prepared to stoop.

"What do you think of me?" she asked abruptly.

"I have told you already," said Sir John: "I think you want another glass of my good wine."

"Come," she said, "this is unlike you. You are not wont to be afraid. You say that you admire my husband: in his name, be honest."—"I admire your courage," said the Baronet. "Beyond that, as you have guessed, and indeed said, our natures are not sympathetic."

"You spoke of scandal," pursued Seraphina. "Was the scandal great?"—"It was considerable," said Sir John.

"And you believed it?" she demanded.

"Oh, madam," said Sir John, "the question!"

"Thank you for that answer!" cried Seraphina. "And now here, I will tell you, upon my honor, upon my soul, in spite of all the scandal in this world, I am as true a wife as ever stood."

"We should probably not agree upon a definition," observed Sir John.

"Oh!" she cried, "I have abominably used him—I know that; it is not that I mean. But if you admire my husband, I insist that you shall understand me: I can look him in the face without a blush."

"It may be, madam," said Sir John; "nor have I presumed to think the contrary."

"You will not believe me?" she cried. "You think I am a guilty wife? You think he was my lover?"

"Madam," returned the Baronet, "when I tore up my papers, I promised your good husband to concern myself no more with your affairs; and I assure you for the last time that I have no desire to judge you."

"But you will not acquit me! Ah!" she cried, "*he* will—he knows better!" Sir John smiled.

"You smile at my distress?" asked Seraphina.

"At your woman's coolness," said Sir John. "A man would scarce have had the courage of that cry, which was, for all that, very natural, and I make no doubt quite true. But remark, madam—since you do me the honor to consult me gravely—I have no pity for what you call your distresses. You have been completely selfish, and now reap the consequence. Had you once thought of your husband, instead of singly thinking of yourself, you would not now have been alone, a fugitive, with blood upon your hands, and hearing from a morose old Englishman truth more bitter than scandal."

"I thank you," she said, quivering. "This is very true. Will you stop the carriage?"

"No, child," said Sir John, "not until I see you mistress of yourself."

There was a long pause, during which the carriage rolled by rock and woodland.

"And now," she resumed, with perfect steadiness, "will you consider me composed? I request you, as a gentleman, to let me out."

"I think you do unwisely," he replied. "Continue, if you please, to use my carriage."

"Sir John," she said, "if death were sitting on that pile of stones, I would alight! I do not blame, I thank you; I now know how I appear to others; but sooner than draw breath beside a man who can so think of me, I would—Oh!" she cried, and was silent.

Sir John pulled the string, alighted, and offered her his hand; but she refused the help.

The road had now issued from the valleys in which it had been winding, and come to that part of its course where it runs, like a cornice, along the brow of the steep northward face of Grünewald. The place where they had alighted was at a salient angle; a bold rock and some wind-tortured pine-trees overhung it from above; far below the blue plains lay forth and melted into heaven; and before them the road, by a succession of bold zigzags, was seen mounting to where a tower upon a tall cliff closed the view.

"There," said the Baronet, pointing to the tower, "you see the Felsenburg, your goal. I wish you a good journey, and regret I can not be of more assistance."

He mounted to his place and gave a signal, and the carriage rolled away.

Seraphina stood by the wayside, gazing before her with blind eyes. Sir John she had dismissed already from her mind: she hated him, that was enough; for whatever Seraphina hated or contemned fell instantly to Lilliputian smallness, and was thenceforward steadily ignored in thought. And now she had matter for concern indeed. Her interview with Otto, which she had never yet forgiven him, began to appear before her in a very different light. He had come to her, still thrilling under recent insult, and not yet breathed from fighting her own cause; and how that knowledge changed the value of his words! Yes, he must have loved her; this was a brave feeling—it was no mere weakness of the will. And she, was she incapable of love? It would appear so; and she swallowed her tears, and yearned to see Otto, to explain all, to ask pity upon her knees for her transgressions, and, if all else were now beyond the reach of reparation, to restore at least the liberty of which she had deprived him.

Swiftly she sped along the highway, and, as the road wound out and in about the bluffs and gullies of the mountain, saw and lost by glimpses the tall tower that stood before and above her, purpled by the mountain air.

CHAPTER II

TREATS OF A CHRISTIAN VIRTUE

WHEN Otto mounted to his rolling prison, he found another occupant in a corner of the front seat; but as this person hung his head and the brightness of the carriage lamps shone outward, the Prince could only see it was a man. The Colonel followed his prisoner and clapped to the door; and at that the four horses broke immediately into a swinging trot.

"Gentlemen," said the Colonel, after some little while had passed, "if we are to travel in silence, we might as well be at home. I appear, of course, in an invidious character; but I am a man of taste, fond of books and solidly informing talk, and unfortunately condemned for life to the guardroom. Gentlemen, this is my chance: don't spoil it for me. I have here the pick of the whole court, barring lovely woman; I have a great author in the person of the Doctor—"

"Gotthold!" cried Otto.

"It appears," said the Doctor, bitterly, "that we must go together. Your Highness had not calculated upon that."

"What do you infer?" cried Otto; "that I had you arrested?"

"The inference is simple," said the Doctor.

"Colonel Gordon," said the Prince, "oblige me so far, and set me right with Herr von Hohenstockwitz."

"Gentlemen," said the Colonel, "you are both arrested on the same warrant in the name of the Princess Seraphina, acting regent, countersigned by Prime Minister Freiherr von Gondremark, and dated the day before yesterday, the twelfth. I reveal to you the secrets of the prison house," he added.

"Otto," said Gotthold, "I ask you to pardon my suspicions."

"Gotthold," said the Prince, "I am not certain I can grant you that."

"Your Highness is, I am sure, far too magnanimous to hesitate," said the Colonel. "But allow me: we speak at home in my religion of the means of grace: and I now propose to offer them." So saying, the Colonel lighted a bright lamp which he attached to one side of the carriage, and from below the front seat produced a goodly basket adorned with the long necks of bottles. *"Tu spem reducis*—how does it go, Doctor?" he asked gaily. "I am, in a sense, your host; and I am sure you are both far too considerate of my embarrassing position to refuse to do me honor. Gentlemen, I drink to the Prince!"

"Colonel," said Otto, "we have a jovial entertainer. I drink to Colonel Gordon."

Thereupon all three took their wine very pleasantly; and even as they did so, the carriage with a lurch turned into the highroad and began to make better speed.

All was bright within; the wine had colored Gotthold's cheek; dim forms of forest trees, dwindling and spiring, scarfs of the starry sky, now wide and now narrow, raced past the windows; through one that was left open the air of the woods came in with a nocturnal raciness; and the roll of wheels and the tune of the trotting horses sounded merrily on the ear. Toast followed toast; glass after glass was bowed across and emptied by the trio; and presently there began to fall upon them a luxurious spell, under the influence of which little but the sound of quiet and confidential laughter interrupted the long intervals of meditative silence.

"Otto," said Gotthold, after one of these seasons of quiet, "I do not ask you to forgive me. Were the parts reversed, I could not forgive you."

"Well," said Otto, "It is a phrase we use. I do forgive you, but your words and your suspicions rankle; and not yours alone. It is idle, Colonel Gordon, in view of the order you are carrying out, to conceal from you the dissensions of my family; they have gone so far that they are now public property. Well, gentlemen, can I forgive my wife? I can, of course, and do; but in what sense? I would certainly not stoop to any revenge; as certainly I could not think of her but as one changed beyond my recognition."

"Allow me," returned the Colonel. "You will permit me to hope that I am addressing Christians? We are all conscious, I trust, that we are miserable sinners."

"I disown the consciousness," said Gotthold. "Warmed with this good fluid, I deny your thesis."

"How, sir? You never did anything wrong? and I heard you asking pardon this moment, not of your God, sir, but of a common fellow-worm!" the Colonel cried.

"I own you have me; you are expert in argument, Herr Oberst," said the Doctor.

"Begad, sir, I am proud to hear you say so," said the Colonel. "I was well grounded indeed at Aberdeen. And as for this matter of forgiveness, it comes, sir, of loose views and (what is if anything more dangerous) a regular life. A sound creed and a bad morality, that's the root of wisdom. You two gentlemen are too good to be forgiving."

"The paradox is somewhat forced," said Gotthold.

"Pardon me, Colonel," said the Prince; "I readily acquit you of any design of offense, but your words bite like satire. Is this a time, do you think, when I can wish to hear myself called good, now that I am paying the penalty (and am willing like yourself to think it just) of my prolonged misconduct?"

"Oh, pardon me!" cried the Colonel. "You have never been expelled from the divinity hall; you have never been broke. I was: broke for a neglect of military duty. To tell you the open truth, your Highness, I was the worse of drink; it's a thing I never do now," he added, taking out his glass. "But a man, you see, who has really tasted the defects of his own character, as I have, and has come to regard himself as a kind of blind teetotum knocking about life, begins to learn a very different view about forgiveness. I will talk of not forgiving others, sir, when I have made out to forgive myself, and not before; and the date is like to be a long one. My father, the Reverend Alexander Gordon, was a good man, and damned hard upon others. I am what they call a bad one, and that is just the difference. The man who can not forgive any mortal thing is a green hand in life."

"And yet I have heard of you, Colonel, as a duelist," said Gotthold.

"A different thing, sir," replied the soldier. "Professional etiquette. And I trust without unchristian feeling."

Presently after the Colonel fell into a deep sleep; and his companions looked upon each other, smiling.

"An odd fish," said Gotthold.

"And a strange guardian," said the Prince. "Yet what he said was true."

"Rightly looked upon," mused Gotthold, "it is ourselves that we can not forgive, when we refuse forgiveness to our friend. Some strand of our own misdoing is involved in every quarrel."

"Are there not offenses that disgrace the pardoner?" asked Otto. "Are there not bounds of self-respect?"

"Otto," said Gotthold, "does any man respect himself? To this poor waif of a soldier of fortune we may seem respectable gentlemen; but to ourselves, what are we unless a pasteboard portico and a deliquium of deadly weaknesses within?"

"I? yes," said Otto; "but you, Gotthold—you, with your interminable industry, your keen mind, your books—serving mankind, scorning pleasures and temptations! You do not know how I envy you."

"Otto," said the Doctor, "in one word, and a bitter one to say: I am a secret tippler. Yes, I drink too much. The habit has robbed these very books, to which you praise my devotion, of the merits that they should have had. It has spoiled my temper. When I spoke to you the other day how much of my warmth was in the cause of virtue? how much was the fever of last night's wine? Ay, as my poor fellow-sot there said, and as I vaingloriously denied, we are all miserable sinners, put here for a moment, knowing the good, choosing the evil, standing naked and ashamed in the eye of God."

"Is it so?" said Otto. "Why, then, what are we? Are the very best—"

"There is no best in man," said Gotthold. "I am not better, it is likely I am not worse, than you or that poor sleeper. I was a sham, and now you know me: that is all."

"And yet it has not changed my love," returned Otto, softly. "Our misdeeds do not change us. Gotthold, fill your glass. Let us drink to what is good in this bad business; let us drink to our old affection; and, when we have done so, forgive your too just grounds of offense, and drink with me to my wife, whom I have so misused, who has so misused me, and whom I have left, I fear, I greatly fear, in danger. What matters it how bad we are, if others can still love us, and we can still love others?"

"Ay!" replied the Doctor. "It is very well said. It is the true answer to the pessimist, and the standing miracle of mankind. So you still love me? and so you can forgive your wife? Why, then, we may bid conscience 'Down, dog,' like an ill-trained puppy yapping at shadows."

The pair fell into silence, the Doctor tapping on his empty glass.

The carriage swung forth out of the valleys on that open balcony of highroad that runs along the front of Grünewald, looking down on Gerolstein. Far below, a white waterfall was shining to the stars from the falling skirts of forest, and beyond that, the night stood naked above the plain. On the other hand, the lamplight skimmed the face of the precipices, and the dwarf pine-trees twinkled with all their needles, and were gone again into the wake. The granite roadway thundered under wheels and hoofs; and at times, by reason of its continual winding, Otto could see the escort on the other side of a ravine, riding well together in the night. Presently the Felsenburg came plainly in view, some way above them, on a bold projection of the mountain, and planting its bulk against the starry sky.

"See, Gotthold," said the Prince, "our destination."

Gotthold awoke as from a trance.

"I was thinking," said he, "if there is danger, why did you not resist? I was told you came of your free will; but should you not be there to help her?"

The color faded from the Prince's cheeks.

CHAPTER III

PROVIDENCE VON ROSEN: ACT THE LAST: IN WHICH SHE GALLOPS OFF

WHEN the busy Countess came forth from her interview with Seraphina, it is not too much to say that she was beginning to be terribly afraid. She paused in the corridor and reckoned up her doings with an eye to Gondremark. The fan was in requisition in an instant; but her disquiet was beyond the reach of fanning. "The girl has lost her head," she thought; and then dismally, "I have gone too far." She instantly decided on secession. Now the *Mons Sacer* of the Frau von Rosen was a certain rustic villa in the forest, called by herself, in a smart attack of poesy, Tannen-Zauber, and by everybody else plain Kleinbrunn.

Thither, upon the thought, she furiously drove, passing Gondremark at the entrance to the Palace avenue, but feigning not to observe him; and as Kleinbrunn was seven good miles away and in the bottom of a narrow dell, she passed the night without any rumor of the outbreak reaching her; and the glow of the conflagration was concealed by intervening hills. Frau von Rosen did not sleep well; she was seriously uneasy as to the results of her delightful evening, and saw herself condemned to quite a lengthy sojourn in her deserts and a long defensive correspondence, ere she could venture to return to Gondremark. On the other hand, she examined, by way of pastime, the deeds she had received from Otto; and even here saw cause for disappointment. In these troublous days she had no taste for landed property, and she was convinced, besides, that Otto had paid dearer than the farm was worth. Lastly, the order for the Prince's release fairly burned her meddling fingers.

All things considered, the next day beheld an elegant and beautiful lady, in a riding-habit and a flapping hat, draw bridle at the gate of the Felsenburg, not perhaps with any clear idea of her purpose, but with her usual experimental views on life. Governor Gordon, summoned to the gate, welcomed the omnipotent Countess with his most gallant bearing, though it was wonderful how old he looked in the morning.

"Ah, Governor," she said, "we have surprises for you, sir," and nodded at him meaningly.

"Eh, madam, leave me my prisoners," he said; "and if you will but join the band, begad, I'll be happy for life."

"You would spoil me, would you not?" she asked.

"I would try, I would try," returned the Governor, and he offered her his arm.

She took it, picked up her skirt, and drew him close to her. "I have come to see the Prince," she said. "Now, infidel! on business. A message from that stupid Gondremark, who keeps me running like a courier. Do I look like one, Herr Gordon?" And she planted her eyes in him.

"You look like an angel, ma'am," returned the Governor, with a great air of finished gallantry.

The Countess laughed. "An angel on horseback!" she said. "Quick work."

"You came, you saw, you conquered," flourished Gordon, in high good humor with his own wit and grace. "We toasted you, madam, in the carriage, in an excellent good glass of wine; toasted you fathom deep; the finest woman, with, begad, the finest eyes in Grünewald. I never saw the like of them but once, in my own country, when I was a young fool at College: Thomasina Haig, her name was. I give you my word of honor, she was as like you as two peas."

"And so you were merry in the carriage?" asked the Countess, gracefully dissembling a yawn.

"We were; we had a very pleasant conversation; but we took perhaps a glass more than that fine fellow of a Prince has been accustomed to," said the Governor; "and I observe this morning that he seems a little off his mettle.

We'll get him mellow again ere bedtime. This is his door."

"Well," she whispered, "let me get my breath. No, no; wait. Have the door ready to open." And the Countess, standing like one inspired, shook out her fine voice in "Lascia ch' io pianga"; and when she had reached the proper point, and lyrically uttered forth her sighings after liberty, the door, at a sign, was flung wide open, and she swam into the Prince's sight, bright-eyed, and with her color somewhat freshened by the exercise of singing. It was a great dramatic entrance, and to the somewhat doleful prisoner within the sight was sunshine.

"Ah, madam," he cried, running to her—"you here!"

She looked meaningly at Gordon; and as soon as the door was closed she fell on Otto's neck. "To see you here!" she moaned and clung to him.

But the Prince stood somewhat stiffly in that enviable situation, and the Countess instantly recovered from her outburst.

"Poor child," she said, "poor child! Sit down beside me here, and tell me all about it. My heart really bleeds to see you. How does time go?"

"Madam," replied the Prince, sitting down beside her, his gallantry recovered, "the time will now go all too quickly till you leave. But I must ask you for the news. I have most bitterly condemned myself for my inertia of last night. You wisely counseled me; it was my duty to resist. You wisely and nobly counseled me; I have since thought of it with wonder. You have a noble heart."

"Otto," she said, "spare me. Was it even right, I wonder? I have duties, too, you poor child; and when I see you they all melt—all my good resolutions fly away."

"And mine still come too late," he replied, sighing. "Oh, what would I not give to have resisted? What would I not give for freedom?"

"Well, what would you give?" she asked; and the red fan was spread; only her eyes, as if from over battlements, brightly surveyed him.

"I? What do you mean? Madam, you have some news for me," he cried.

"Oh, oh!" said madam, dubiously.

He was at her feet. "Do not trifle with my hopes," he pleaded. "Tell me, dearest Madame von Rosen, tell me! You can not be cruel: it is not in your nature. Give? I can give nothing; I have nothing; I can only plead in mercy."

"Do not," she said; "it is not fair. Otto, you know my weakness. Spare me. Be generous."

"Oh, madam," he said, "it is for you to be generous, to have pity." He took her hand and pressed it; he plied her with caresses and appeals. The Countess had a most enjoyable sham siege, and then relented. She sprang to her feet, she tore her dress open, and, all warm from her bosom, threw the order on the floor.

"There!" she cried. "I forced it from her. Use it, and I am ruined!" And she turned away as if to veil the force of her emotions.

Otto sprang upon the paper, read it, and cried out aloud. "Oh, God bless her!" he said, "God bless her." And he kissed the writing.

Von Rosen was a singularly good-natured woman, but her part was now beyond her. "Ingrate!" she cried; "I wrung it from her, I betrayed my trust to get it, and 'tis she you thank!"

"Can you blame me?" said the Prince. "I love her."

"I see that," she said. "And I?"

"You, Madame von Rosen? You are my dearest, my kindest, and most generous of friends," he said, approaching her. "You would be a perfect friend, if you were not so lovely. You have a great sense of humor, you can not be unconscious of your charm, and you amuse yourself at times by playing on my weakness; and at times I can take pleasure in the comedy. But not to-day: to-day you will be the true, the serious, the manly friend, and you will suffer me to forget that you are lovely and that I am weak. Come, dear Countess, let me to-day repose in you entirely."

He held out his hand, smiling, and she took it frankly. "I vow you have bewitched me," she said; and then with a laugh, "I break my staff!" she added; "and I must pay you my best compliment. You made a difficult speech. You are as adroit, dear Prince, as I am—charming." And as she said the word with a great courtesy, she justified it.

"You hardly keep the bargain, madam, when you make yourself so beautiful," said the Prince, bowing.

"It was my last arrow," she returned. "I am disarmed. Blank cartridge, *O mon Prince!* And now I tell you, if you choose to leave this prison, you can, and I am ruined. Choose!"

"Madame von Rosen," replied Otto, "I choose, and I will go. My duty points me, duty still neglected by this Featherhead. But do not fear to be a loser. I propose instead that you should take me with you, a bear in chains, to Baron Gondremark. I am become perfectly unscrupulous: to save my wife I will do all, all he can ask or fancy. He shall be filled; were he huge as leviathan and greedy as the grave, I will content him. And you, the fairy of our pantomime, shall have the credit."

"Done!" she cried. "Admirable! Prince Charming no longer—Prince Sorcerer, Prince Solon! Let us go this moment. Stay," she cried, pausing. "I beg, dear Prince, to give you back these deeds. 'Twas you who liked the farm—I have not seen it; and it was you who wished to benefit the peasants. And, besides," she added, with a comical change of tone, "I should prefer the ready money."

Both laughed. "Here I am, once more a farmer," said Otto, accepting the papers, "but overwhelmed in debt."

The Countess touched a bell, and the Governor appeared.

"Governor," she said, "I am going to elope with his Highness. The result of our talk has been a thorough understanding, and the *coup d'état* is over. Here is the order."

Colonel Gordon adjusted silver spectacles upon his nose.

"Yes," he said, "the Princess: very right. But the warrant, madam, was countersigned."

"By Heinrich!" said von Rosen. "Well, and here am I to represent him."

"Well, your Highness," resumed the soldier of fortune, "I must congratulate you upon my loss. You have been cut out by beauty, and I am left lamenting. The Doctor still remains to me: *probus, doctus, lepidus, jucundus:* a man of books."

"Ay, there is nothing about poor Gotthold," said the Prince.

"The Governor's consolation? Would you leave him bare?" asked von Rosen.

"And, your Highness," resumed Gordon, "may I trust that in the course of this temporary obscuration, you have found me discharge my part with suitable respect and, I may add, tact? I adopted purposely a cheerfulness of manner; mirth, it appeared to me, and a good glass of wine, were the fit alleviations."

"Colonel," said Otto, holding out his hand, "your society was of itself enough. I do not merely thank you for your pleasant spirits; I have to thank you, besides, for some philosophy, of which I stood in need. I trust I do not see you for the last time; and in the mean while, as a memento of our strange acquaintance, let me offer you these verses on which I was but now engaged. I am so little of a poet, and was so ill inspired by prison bars, that they have some claim to be at least a curiosity."

The Colonel's countenance lighted as he took the paper; the silver spectacles were hurriedly replaced. "Ha!" he said, "Alexandrines, the tragic meter. I shall cherish this, your Highness, like a relic; no more suitable offering, although I say it, could be made. 'Dieux de l'immense plaine et des vastes forêts.' Very good," he said, "very good indeed! 'Et du geolier lui-même apprendre des leçons.' Most handsome, begad!"

"Come, Governor," cried the Countess, "you can read his poetry when we are gone. Open your grudging portals."

"I ask your pardon," said the Colonel. "To a man of my character and tastes, these verses, this handsome reference—most moving, I assure you. Can I offer you an escort?"

"No, no," replied the Countess. "We go incogniti, as we arrived. We ride together; the Prince will take my servant's horse. Hurry and privacy, Herr Oberst, that is all we seek." And she began impatiently to lead the way.

But Otto had still to bid farewell to Doctor Gotthold; and the Governor following, with his spectacles in one hand and the paper in the other, had still to communicate his treasured verses, piece by piece, as he succeeded in deciphering the manuscript, to all he came across; and still his enthusiasm mounted. "I declare," he cried at last, with the air of one who has at length divined a mystery, "they remind me of Robbie Burns!"

But there is an end to all things; and at length Otto was walking by the side of Madame von Rosen, along that mountain wall, her servant following with both the horses, and all about them sunlight, and breeze, and flying bird, and the vast regions of the air, and the capacious prospect: wildwood and climbing pinnacle, and the sound and voice of mountain torrents, at their hand: and far below them, green melting into sapphire on the plains.

They walked at first in silence; for Otto's mind was full of the delight of liberty and nature, and still, between whiles, he was preparing his interview with Gondremark. But when the first rough promontory of the rock was turned, and the Felsenburg concealed behind its bulk, the lady paused.

"Here," she said, "I will dismount poor Karl, and you and I must ply our spurs. I love a wild ride with a good companion."

As she spoke, a carriage came into sight round the corner next below them in the order of the road. It came heavily creaking, and a little ahead of it a traveler was soberly walking, note-book in hand.

"It is Sir John," cried Otto, and he hailed him.

The Baronet pocketed his note-book, stared through an eye-glass, and then waved his stick; and he on his side, and the Countess and the Prince on theirs, advanced with somewhat quicker steps. They met at the reentrant angle, where a thin stream sprayed across the boulder and was scattered in rain among the brush; and the Baronet saluted the Prince with much punctilio. To the Countess, on the other hand, he bowed with a kind of sneering wonder.

"Is it possible, madam, that you have not heard the news?" he asked.

"What news?" she cried.

"News of the first order," returned Sir John: "a revolution in the State, a Republic declared, the Palace burned to the ground, the Princess in flight, Gondremark wounded—"

"Heinrich wounded?" she screamed.

"Wounded and suffering acutely," said Sir John. "His groans—"

There fell from the lady's lips an oath so potent that, in smoother hours, it would have made her hearers jump. She ran to her horse, scrambled to the saddle, and, yet half seated, dashed down the road at full gallop. The groom, after a pause of wonder, followed her. The rush of her impetuous passage almost scared the carriage horses over the verge of the steep hill; and still she clattered further, and the crags echoed to her flight, and still the groom flogged vainly in pursuit of her. At the fourth corner, a woman trailing slowly up leaped back with a cry and escaped death by a hand's-breadth. But the Countess wasted neither glance nor thought upon the incident. Out and in, about the bluffs of the mountain wall, she fled, loose-reined, and still the groom toiled in her pursuit.

"A most impulsive lady!" said Sir John. "Who would have thought she cared for him?" And before the words were uttered, he was struggling in the Prince's grasp.

"My wife! the Princess? What of her?"

"She is down the road," he gasped. "I left her twenty minutes back."

And next moment, the choked author stood alone, and the Prince on foot was racing down the hill behind the Countess.

CHAPTER IV

BABES IN THE WOOD

WHILE the feet of the Prince continued to run swiftly, his heart, which had at first by far outstripped his running, soon began to linger and hang back. Not that he ceased to pity the misfortune or to yearn for the sight of Seraphina; but the memory of her obdurate coldness awoke within him, and woke in turn his own habitual diffidence of self. Had Sir John been given time to tell him all, had he even known that she was speeding to the Felsenburg, he would have gone to her with ardor. As it was, he began to see himself once more intruding, profiting, perhaps, by her misfortune, and now that she was fallen, proffering unloved caresses to the wife who had spurned him in prosperity. The sore spots upon his vanity began to burn; once more, his anger assumed the carriage of a hostile generosity; he would utterly forgive indeed; he would help, save, and comfort his unloving wife; but all with distant self-denial, imposing silence on his heart, respecting Seraphina's disaffection as he would the innocence of a child. So, when at length he turned a corner and beheld the Princess, it was his first thought to reassure her of the purity of his respect, and he at once ceased running and stood still. She, upon her part, began to run to him with a little cry; then, seeing him pause, she paused also, smitten with remorse; and at length, with the most guilty timidity, walked nearly up to where he stood.

"Otto," she said, "I have ruined all!"

"Seraphina!" he cried with a sob, but did not move, partly withheld by his resolutions, partly struck stupid at the sight of her weariness and disorder. Had she stood silent, they had soon been locked in an embrace. But she too had prepared herself against the interview, and must spoil the golden hour with protestations.

"All!" she went on, "I have ruined all! But, Otto, in kindness you must hear me—not justify, but own, my faults. I have been taught so cruelly; I have had such time for thought, and see the world so changed. I have been blind, stone-blind; I have let all true good go by me, and lived on shadows. But when this dream fell, and I had betrayed you, and thought I had killed—" She paused. "I thought I had killed Gondremark," she said with a deep flush, "and I found myself alone as you said."

The mention of the name Gondremark pricked the Prince's generosity like a spur. "Well," he cried, "and whose fault was it but mine? It was my duty to be beside you, loved or not. But I was a skulker in the grain, and found it easier to desert than to oppose you. I could never learn that better part of love, to fight love's battles. But yet the love was there. And now when this toy kingdom of ours has fallen, first of all by my demerits, and next by your inexperience, and we are here alone together, as poor as Job and merely a man and a woman—let me conjure you to forgive the weakness and to repose in the love. Do not mistake me!" he cried, seeing her about to speak, and imposing silence with uplifted hand. "My love is changed; it is purged of any conjugal pretension; it does not ask, does not hope, does not wish, for a return in kind. You may forget forever that part in which you found me so distasteful, and accept without embarrassment the affection of a brother."

"You are too generous, Otto," she said. "I know that I have forfeited your love. I can not take this sacrifice. You had far better leave me. Oh, go away, and leave me to my fate!"

"Oh, no!" said Otto! "we must first of all escape out of this hornet's nest, to which I led you. My honor is engaged. I said but now we were as poor as Job; and behold! not many miles from here I have a house of my own to which I will conduct you. Otto the Prince being down, we must try what luck remains to Otto the Hunter. Come, Seraphina; show that you forgive me, and let us set about this business of escape in the best spirits possible. You used to say, my dear, that except as a husband and a prince, I was a pleasant fellow. I am neither now, and you may like my company without remorse. Come, then; it were idle to be captured. Can you still walk? Forth, then," said he, and he began to lead the way.

A little below where they stood, a good-sized brook passed below the road, which overleaped it in a single arch. On one bank of that loquacious water a footpath descended a green dell. Here it was rocky and stony, and lay on the steep scarps of the ravine; here it was choked with brambles; and there, in fairy haughs, it lay for a few paces evenly on the green turf. Like a sponge, the hillside oozed with well-water. The burn kept growing both in force and volume; at every leap it fell with heavier plunges and span more widely in the pool. Great had been the labors of that stream, and great and agreeable the changes it had wrought. It had cut through dikes of stubborn rock, and now, like a blowing dolphin, spouted through the orifice; along all its humble coasts, it had undermined and rafted-down the goodlier timber of the forests; and on these rough clearings it now set and tended primrose gardens, and planted woods of willow, and made a favorite of the silver birch.

Through all these friendly features the path, its human acolyte, conducted our two wanderers downward,—Otto before, still pausing at the more difficult passages to lend assistance; the Princess following. From time to time, when he turned to help her, her face would lighten upon his—her eyes, half desperately, woo him. He saw, but dared not understand. "She does not love me," he told himself, with magnanimity. "This is remorse or gratitude; I were no gentleman, no, nor yet a man, if I presumed upon these pitiful concessions."

Some way down the glen, the stream, already grown to a good bulk of water, was rudely dammed across, and about a third of it abducted in a wooden trough. Gaily the pure water, air's first cousin, fleeted along the rude aqueduct, whose sides and floor it had made green with grasses. The path, bearing it close company, threaded a wilderness of briar and wild rose. And presently, a little in front, the brown top of a mill and the tall millwheel, spraying diamonds, arose in the narrows of the glen; at the same time the snoring music of the saws broke the silence.

The miller, hearing steps, came forth to his door, and both he and Otto started.

"Good morning, miller," said the Prince. "You were right, it seems, and I was wrong. I give you the news, and bid you to Mittwalden. My throne has fallen—great was the fall of it!—and your good friends of the Phœnix bear the rule."

The red-faced miller looked supreme astonishment. "And your Highness?" he gasped.

"My Highness is running away," replied Otto, "straight for the frontier."

"Leaving Grünewald?" cried the man. "Your father's son? It's not to be permitted!"

"Do you arrest us, friend?" asked Otto, smiling.

"Arrest you? I?" exclaimed the man. "For what does your Highness take me? Why, sir, I make sure there is not a man in Grünewald would lay hands upon you."

"Oh, many, many," said the Prince; "but from you, who were bold with me in my greatness, I should even look for aid in my distress."

The miller became the color of beetroot. "You may say so indeed," said he. "And meanwhile, will you and your lady step into my house?"

"We have not time for that," replied the Prince; "but if you would oblige us with a cup of wine without here, you will give a pleasure and a service both in one."

The miller once more colored to the nape. He hastened to bring forth wine in a pitcher and three bright crystal tumblers. "Your Highness must not suppose," he said, as he filled them, "that I am an habitual drinker. The time when I had the misfortune to encounter you, I was a trifle overtaken, I allow; but a more sober man than I am in my ordinary, I do not know where you are to look for; and even this glass that I drink to you (and to the lady) is quite an unusual recreation."

The wine was drunk with due rustic courtesies; and then, refusing further hospitality, Otto and Seraphina once more proceeded to descend the glen, which now began to open and to be invaded by the taller trees.

"I owed that man a reparation," said the Prince; "for when we met I was in the wrong and put a sore affront upon him. I judge by myself, perhaps; but I begin to think that no one is the better for a humiliation."

"But some have to be taught so," she replied.

"Well, well," he said, with a painful embarrassment. "Well, well. But let us think of safety. My miller is all very good, but I do not pin my faith to him. To follow down this stream will bring us, but after innumerable windings, to my house. Here, up this glade, there lies a cross-cut—the world's end for solitude—the very deer scarce visit it. Are you too tired, or could you pass that way?"

"Choose the path, Otto. I will follow you," she said.

"No," he replied, with a singular imbecility of manner and appearance, "but I meant the path was rough. It lies, all the way, by glade and dingle, and the dingles are both deep and thorny."

"Lead on," she said. "Are you not Otto the Hunter?"

They had now burst across a veil of underwood, and were come into a lawn among the forest, very green and innocent, and solemnly surrounded by trees. Otto paused on the margin, looking about him with delight; then his glance returned to Seraphina, as she stood framed in that sylvan pleasantness and looking at her husband with undecipherable eyes. A weakness both of the body and mind fell on him like the beginnings of sleep; the cords of his activity were relaxed, his eyes clung to her. "Let us rest," he said; and he made her sit down, and himself sat down beside her on the slope of an inconsiderable mound.

She sat with her eyes downcast, her slim hand dabbling in grass, like a maid waiting for love's summons. The sound of the wind in the forest swelled and sank, and drew near them with a running rush, and died away and away in the distance into fainting whispers. Nearer hand, a bird out of the deep covert uttered broken and anxious notes. All this seemed but a halting prelude to speech. To Otto it seemed as if the whole frame of nature were waiting for his words; and yet his pride kept him silent. The longer he watched that slender and pale hand plucking at the grasses, the harder and rougher grew the fight between pride and its kindly adversary.

"Seraphina," he said at last, "it is right you should know one thing: I never . . ." He was about to say "doubted you," but was that true? And, if true, was it generous to speak of it? Silence succeeded.

"I pray you, tell it me," she said; "tell it me, in pity."

"I mean only this," he resumed, "that I understand all, and do not blame you. I understand how the brave woman must look down on the weak man. I think you were wrong in some things; but I have tried to understand it, and I do. I do not need to forget or to forgive, Seraphina, for I have understood."

"I know what I have done," she said. "I am not so weak that I can be deceived with kind speeches. I know what I have been—I see myself. I am not worth your anger, how much less to be forgiven! In all this downfall and misery, I see only me and you: you, as you have been always; me, as I was—me, above all! Oh, yes, I see myself: and what can I think?"

"Ah, then, let us reverse the parts!" said Otto. "It is ourselves we can not forgive, when we deny forgiveness to another—so a friend told me last night. On these terms, Seraphina, you see how generously I have forgiven myself. But am not *I* to be forgiven? Come, then, forgive yourself—and me."

She did not answer in words, but reached out her hand to him quickly. He took it; and as the smooth fingers settled and nestled in his, love ran to and fro between them in tender and transforming currents.

"Seraphina," he cried, "oh, forget the past! Let me serve and help you; let me be your servant; it is enough for me to serve you and to be near you; let me be near you, dear—do not send me away." He hurried his pleading like the speech of a frightened child. "It is not love," he went on; "I do not ask for love; my love is enough . . ."

"Otto," she said, as if in pain.

He looked up into her face. It was wrung with the very ecstasy of tenderness and anguish; on her features, and most of all in her changed eyes, there shone the very light of love.

"Seraphina?" he cried aloud, and with a sudden, tuneless voice, "Seraphina?"

"Look round you at this glade," she cried, "and where the leaves are coming on young trees, and the flowers begin to blossom. This is where we meet, meet for the first time; it is so much better to forget and to be born again. Oh, what a pit there is for sins—God's mercy, man's oblivion!"

"Seraphina," he said, "let it be so, indeed; let all that was be merely the abuse of dreaming; let me begin again, a stranger. I have dreamed, in a long dream, that I adored a girl unkind and beautiful; in all things my superior, but still cold like ice. And again I dreamed, and thought she changed and melted, glowed and turned to me. And I—who had no merit but a love, slavish and unerect—lay close, and durst not move for fear of waking."

"Lie close," she said, with a deep thrill of speech.

So they spake in the spring woods; and meanwhile, in Mittwalden Rathhaus, the Republic was declared.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL POSTSCRIPT

TO COMPLETE THE STORY

THE reader well informed in modern history will not require details as to the fate of the Republic. The best account is to be found in the memoirs of Herr Greisengesang (7 Bände: Leipzig), by our passing acquaintance the licentiate Roederer. Herr Roederer, with too much of an author's license, makes a great figure of his hero—poses him, indeed, to be the center-piece and cloud-compeller of the whole. But, with due allowance for this bias, the book is able and complete.

The reader is, of course, acquainted with the vigorous and bracing pages of Sir John (2 volumes: London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme & Brown). Sir John, who plays but a toothcomb in the orchestra of this historical romance, blows in his own book the big bassoon. His character is there drawn at large; and the sympathy of Landor has countersigned the admiration of the public. One point, however, calls for explanation; the chapter on Grünewald was torn by the hand of the author in the palace gardens; how comes it, then, to figure at full length among my more modest pages, the Lion of the caravan? That eminent literatus was a man of method; "Juvenal by double entry," he was once profanely called; and when he tore the sheets in question, it was rather, as he has since explained, in the search for some dramatic evidence of his sincerity, than with the thought of practical deletion. At that time, indeed, he was possessed of two blotted scrolls and a fair copy in double. But the chapter, as the reader knows, was honestly omitted from the famous "Memoirs on the various Courts of Europe." It has been mine to give it to the public.

Bibliography still helps us with a farther glimpse of our characters. I have here before me a small volume (printed for private circulation: no printer's name; n.d.) "Poésies par Frédéric et Amélie." Mine is a presentation copy, obtained for me by Mr. Bain in the Haymarket; and the name of the first owner is written on the fly-leaf in the hand of Prince Otto himself. The modest epigraph—"Le rime n'est pas riche"—may be attributed, with a good show of likelihood, to the same collaborator. It is strikingly appropriate, and I have found the volume very dreary. Those pieces in which I seem to trace the hand of the Princess are particularly dull and conscientious. But the booklet had a fair success with that public for which it was designed; and I have come across some evidences of a second venture of the same sort, now unprocurable. Here, at least, we may take leave of Otto and Seraphina—what do I say? of Frédéric and Amélie—aging together peaceably at the court of the wife's father, jingling French rimes and correcting joint proofs.

Still following the book-lists, I perceive that Mr. Swinburne has dedicated a rousing lyric and some vigorous sonnets to the memory of Gondremark; that name appears twice at least in Victor Hugo's trumpet blasts of patriot enumeration; and I came latterly, when I supposed my task already ended, on a trace of the fallen politician and his Countess. It is in the "Diary of J. Hogg Cotterill, Esq." (that very interesting work). Mr. Cotterill, being at Naples, is introduced (May 27th) to "a Baron and Baroness Gondremark—he a man who once made a noise—she still beautiful—both witty. She complimented me much upon my French—should never have known me to be English—had known my uncle, Sir John, in Germany—recognized in me, as a family trait, some of his *grand air* and studious courtesy—asked me to call." And again (May 30th) "visited the Baronne de Gondremark—much gratified—a most *refined, intelligent* woman, quite of the old school, now *hélas!* extinct—had read my *Remarks on Sicily*—it reminds her of my uncle, but with more of grace—I feared she thought there was less energy—assured no—a softer style of presentation, more of the *literary grace,* but the same firm grasp of circumstance and force of thought—in short, just Buttonhole's opinion. Much encouraged. I have a real esteem for this patrician lady." The acquaintance lasted some time; and when Mr. Cotterill left in the suite of Lord Protocol, and, as he is careful to inform us, in Admiral Yardarm's flagship, one of his chief causes of regret is to leave "that most *spirituelle* and sympathetic lady, who already regards me as a younger brother."

A TRAGEDY OF THE GREAT NORTH ROAD

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A TRAGEDY OF THE GREAT NORTH ROAD

I

NANCE AT THE GREEN DRAGON

NANCE HOLDAWAY was on her knees before the fire blowing the green wood that voluminously smoked upon the dogs, and only now and then shot forth a smothered flame; her knees already ached and her eyes smarted, for she had been some while at this ungrateful task; but her mind was gone far away to meet the coming stranger. Now she met him in the wood, now at the castle gate, now in the kitchen by candlelight; each fresh presentiment eclipsed the one before; a form so elegant; a countenance so brave and comely; a voice so winning and resolute—sure such a man was never seen!

The thick-coming fancies poured and brightened in her head, like the smoke and flames upon the hearth.

Presently the heavy foot of her Uncle Jonathan was heard upon the stair, and as he entered the room she bent the closer to her work He glanced at the green fagots with a sneer, and looked askance at the bed and the white sheets; at the strip of carpet laid, like an island, on the great expanse of the stone floor, and at the broken glazing of the casement clumsily repaired with paper.

"Leave that fire a-be," he cried. "What, have I toiled all my life to turn innkeeper at the hind end? Leave it a-be, I say."

"La, uncle, it doesn't burn a bit; it only smokes," said Nance, looking up from her position.

"You are come of decent people on the both sides," returned the old man. "Who are you to blow the coals for

Illustrated London News, Christmas Number, 1895.

any Robinrunagate? Get up; get on your hood; make yourself useful, and be off to the Green Dragon."

"I thought you was to go yourself," Nance faltered.

"So did I," quoth Jonathan, "but it appears I was mistook."

The very excess of her eagerness alarmed her, and she began to hang back. "I think I would rather not, dear uncle," she said. "Night is at hand, and I think, dear, I would rather not."

"Now you look here," replied Jonathan. "I have my lord's orders, have I not? Little he gives me; but it's all my livelihood. And do you fancy, if I disobey my lord, I'm likely to turn around for a lass like you? No; I've that hell-fire of pain in my old knee. I wouldn't walk a mile, not for King George upon his bended knees." And he walked to the window and looked down the steep scarp to where the river foamed in the bottom of the dell.

Nance stayed for no more bidding. In her own room, by the glimmer of the twilight, she washed her hands and pulled on her Sunday mittens, adjusted her black hood, and tied, a dozen times, its cherry ribbons; and in less than ten minutes, with a fluttering heart and excellently bright eyes, she passed forth under the arch and over the bridge into the thickening shadows of the groves. A well-marked wheel-track conducted her. The wood, which on both sides of the river dell was a mere scrambling thicket of hazel, hawthorn, and holly, boasted on the level of more considerable timber. Beeches came to a good growth, with here and there an oak, and the track now passed under a high arcade of branches, and now ran under the open sky in glades. As the girl proceeded, these glades became more frequent, the trees began again to decline in size, and the wood to degenerate into furzy coverts. Last of all there was a fringe of elders, and beyond that the track came forth upon an open-rolling moorland dotted with wind-bowed and scanty bushes, and all golden-brown with the winter, like a grouse. Right over against the girl, the last red embers of the sunset burned under horizontal clouds; the night fell clear, and still, and frosty, like some rich varnish on the colors of the world, and the track, in low and marshy passages, began to crackle underfoot with ice.

Some half a mile beyond the borders of the wood, the lights of the Green Dragon hove in sight, and running close beside them, very faint in the dying dusk, the pale ribbon of the Great North Road. It was the back of the post-house that was presented to Nance Holdaway; and as she continued to draw near and the night to fall more completely, she became aware of an unusual brightness and bustle. A post-chaise stood in the yard, its lamps already lighted; light shone hospitably in the windows and from the open door; moving lights and shadows testified to the activity of servants bearing lanterns. The clank of pails, the stamping of hoofs on the firm causeway, the jingle of harness, and last of all, the energetic hissing of a groom, began to fall upon her ear. By the stir you would have thought the mail was at the door, but it was still too early in the night. The down mail was not due at the Green Dragon for hard upon an hour; the up mail from Scotland not before two in the black morning.

Nance entered the yard somewhat dazzled. Sam, the tall hostler, was polishing a curb-chain with sand, the lantern at his feet letting up spouts of candle-light through the holes with which its conical roof was peppered.

"Hey, miss," said he jocularly, "you won't look at me any more, now you have gentry at the castle."

Her cheeks burned with anger.

"That's my lord's chay," the man continued, nodding at the chaise; "Lord Windermoor's. Came all in a fluster: dinner, bowl of punch, and put the horses to. By all the world like a runaway match—bar the bride. He brought your Mr. Archer in the chay with him."

"Is that you, Holdaway?" cried the landlord from the lighted entry, where he stood shading his eyes.

"Only me, sir," answered Nance.

"Oh, you, Miss Nance," he said. "Well, come in quick, my pretty. My lord is awaiting for your uncle."

And he ushered Nance into a room cased with yellow wainscot and lighted by tall candles, where two gentlemen sat at a table finishing a bowl of punch. One of these was stout, elderly, and irascible, with a face like a full moon, well dyed with liquor; thick, tremulous lips, a short, purple hand in which he brandished a pipe, and an abrupt and gobbling utterance. This was my Lord Windermoor. In his companion, Nance beheld a younger man, tall, quiet, grave, demurely dressed, and wearing his own hair. Her glance but lighted on him, and she flushed; for in that second she made sure that she had twice betrayed herself: betrayed by the involuntary flash of her black eyes her secret impatience to behold this new companion, and, what was far worse, betrayed her disappointment in the realization of her dreams. He, meanwhile, as if unconscious, continued to regard her with unmoved decorum.

"What! what!" said his lordship. "Who is this?"

"If you please, my lord, I am Holdaway's niece," replied Nance with a courtesy.

"Should have been here himself," observed his lordship. "Well, you tell Holdaway that I'm aground, not a stiver—not a stiver. I'm running from the beagles;—going abroad, tell Holdaway. And he need look for no more wages; glad of 'em myself, if I could get 'em. He can live in the castle if he likes, or go to the devil. Oh, and here is Mr. Archer; and I recommend him to take him in; a friend of mine, and Mr. Archer will pay as I wrote; and I regard that as a precious good thing for Holdaway, let me tell you, and a set-off against the wages."

"But, oh, my lord," cried Nance, "we live upon the wages, and what are we to do without?"

"What am I to do, what am I to do?" replied Lord Windermoor with some exasperation. "I have no wages, and there is Mr. Archer, and if Holdaway doesn't like it, he can go to the devil, and you with him,—and you with him."

"And yet, my lord," said Mr. Archer, "these good people will have as keen a sense of loss as you or I; keener, perhaps, since they have done nothing to deserve it."

"Deserve it!" cried the peer. "What! what! If a rascally highwayman comes up to me with a confounded pistol, do you say that I've deserved it? How often am I to tell you, sir, that I was cheated,—that I was cheated?"

"You are happy in the belief," returned Mr. Archer gravely.

"Archer, you would be the death of me," exclaimed his lordship. "You know you're drunk; you know it, sir; and yet you can't get up a spark of animation."

"I have drank fair, my lord," replied the younger man; "but I own I am conscious of no exhilaration."

"If you had as black a lookout as me, sir," cried the peer, "you would be damned glad of a little innocent exhilaration, let me tell you. I am glad of it; glad of it; and I wish I was drunker. For let me tell you it's a cruel, hard thing upon a man of my time of life, and my position, to be brought down to beggary because the world is full of thieves and rascals—thieves and rascals. What? For all that I know you may be a thief and a rascal yourself; and I would fight you for a pinch of snuff,—a pinch of snuff," exclaimed his lordship.

Here Mr. Archer turned to Nance Holdaway with a pleasant smile, so full of sweetness, kindness, and composure that, at one bound, her dreams returned to her. "My good Miss Holdaway," said he, "if you are willing to show me the road, I am eager to go. As for his lordship and myself, compose yourself; there is no fear; this is his lordship's way."

"What!" cried his lordship. "My way? Ish no such a thing, my way."

"Come, my lord," cried Archer; "you and I very thoroughly understand each other; and let me suggest it is time that both of us were gone. The mail will soon be due. Here, then, my lord, I take my leave of you, with the most earnest assurance of my gratitude for the past, and a sincere offer of any services I may be able to render in the future."

"Archer," exlaimed Lord Windermoor, "I love you like a son. Le's have another bowl."

"My lord, you will excuse me," replied Mr. Archer. "We both require caution; we must both, for some while at least, avoid the chance of a pursuit."

"Archer," quoth his lordship, "this is a rank ingratishood. What! I'm to go firing away in the dark, in the cold po'chaise, and not so much as a game of écarté possible, unless I stop and play with the postilion; and the whole country swarming with thieves, and rascals, and highwaymen."

"I beg your lordship's pardon," put in the landlord, who now appeared in the doorway to announce the chaise; "but this part of the North Road is known for safety. There has not been a robbery, to call a robbery, this five years' time. Farther south, of course, it's nearer London, and another story," he added.

"Well, then, if that's so," concluded my lord, "le's have t'other bowl and a pack of cards."

"My lord, you forget," said Archer. "I might still gain, but it is hardly possible for me to lose."

"Think I'm a sharper?" inquired the peer. "Gen'leman's parole's all I ask."

But Mr. Archer was proof against their blandishments, and said farewell gravely enough to Lord Windermoor, shaking his hand and at the same time bowing very low. "You will never know," said he, "the service you have done me." And with that, and before my lord had finally taken up his meaning, he had slipped about the table, touched Nance lightly but imperiously on the arm, and left the room. In face of the outbreak of his lordship's lamentations, she made haste to follow the truant.

II

IN WHICH MR. ARCHER IS INSTALLED

THE chaise had been driven around to the front door; the courtyard lay all deserted, and only lit by a lantern set upon a window sill. Through this Nance rapidly led the way, and began to ascend the swellings of the moor with a heart that somewhat fluttered in her bosom. She was not afraid; but in the course of these last passages with Lord Windermoor, Mr. Archer had ascended to that pedestal on which her fancy waited to install him; the reality, she felt, excelled her dreams; and this cold night walk was the first romantic incident in her experience.

It was the rule in these days to see gentlemen unsteady after dinner; yet Nance was both surprised and amused when her companion, who had spoken so soberly, began to stumble and waver by her side with the most airy divagations. Sometimes he would get so close to her that she must edge away, and at others lurch clear out of the track and plow among deep heather. His courtesy and gravity meanwhile remained unaltered. He asked her how far they had to go; whether the way lay all upon the moorland; and when he learned they had to pass a wood expressed his pleasure. "For," said he, "I am passionately fond of trees. Trees and fair lawns, if you consider of it rightly, are the ornaments of Nature, as palaces and fine approaches." And here he stumbled and nearly fell. The girl had hard work not to laugh; but at heart she was lost in admiration for one who talked so elegantly.

They had got to about a quarter of a mile from the Green Dragon, and were near the summit of the rise, when a sudden rush of wheels arrested them. Turning and looking back, they saw the post-house, now much declined in brightness, and speeding away northward the two tremulous, bright dots of my Lord Windermoor's chaise-lamps. Mr. Archer followed these yellow and unsteady stars until they dwindled into points and disappeared.

"There goes my only friend," he said. "Death has cut off those that loved me, and change of fortune estranged my flatterers; and but for you, poor crapulous bankrupt, my life is as lonely as this moor."

The tone of his voice affected both of them. They stood there on the side of the moor, and became thrillingly conscious of the void waste of the night, without a feature for the eye, and except for the fainting whisper of the carriage wheels, without a murmur for the ear. And instantly, like a mockery, there broke out, very far away, but clear and jolly, the note of the mail-guard's horn. "Over the Hills," was his air; it rose to the two watchers on the moor with the most cheerful sentiment of human company and travel; and at the same time, in and around the Green Dragon it woke up a great bustle of lights running to and fro, and clattering hoofs. Presently after, out of the darkness to southward, the mail grew near with a growing rumble. Its lamps were very large and bright, and threw their radiance forward in overlapping cones; the four cantering horses swarmed and steamed; the body of the coach followed like a great shadow; and this lit picture slid with a sort of ineffectual swiftness over the black field of night, and was eclipsed by the buildings of the Green Dragon.

Mr. Archer turned abruptly and resumed his former walk, only that he was now more steady, kept better alongside his young conductor, and had fallen into a silence broken by sighs. Nance waxed very pitiful over his fate, contrasting an imaginary past of courts and great society, and, perhaps, the king himself, with the tumble-down ruin in a wood to which she was now conducting him.

"You must try, sir, to keep your spirits up," said she. "To be sure, this is a great change for one like you; but who knows the future?"

Mr. Archer turned toward her in the darkness, and she could clearly perceive that he smiled upon her very kindly. "There spoke a sweet nature," said he, "and I must thank you for these words. But I would not have you fancy that I regret the past for any happiness found in it, or that I fear the simplicity and hardship of the country. I am a man that has been much tossed about in life; now up, now down: and do you think that I shall not be able to support what you support,—you who are kind and therefore know how to feel pain; who are beautiful, and therefore hope; who are young, and therefore, or I am the more mistaken, discontented?"

"Nay, sir, not that at least," said Nance, "not discontented. If I were to be discontented, how should I look those that have real sorrows in the face? I have faults enough, but not that fault; and I have my merits, too, for I have a good opinion of myself. But for beauty, I am not so simple but that I can tell a banter from a compliment."

"Nay, nay," said Mr. Archer, "I had half forgotten grief is selfish; and I was thinking of myself and not of you, or I had never blurted out so bold a piece of praise. 'Tis the best proof of my sincerity. But, come now, I would lay a wager you are no coward?"

"Indeed, sir, I am not more afraid than another," said Nance. "None of my blood are given to fear."

"And you are honest?" he returned.

"I will answer for that," said she.

"Well, then; to be brave, to be honest, to be kind, and to be contented, since you say you are so—is not that to fill up a great part of virtue?"

"I fear you are but a flatterer," said Nance, but she did not say it clearly, for what with bewilderment and satisfaction her heart was quite oppressed.

There could be no harm, certainly, in these grave compliments; but yet they charmed and frightened her, and to find favor, for reasons however obscure, in the eyes of this elegant, serious, and most unfortunate young gentleman, was a giddy elevation, was almost an apotheosis, for a country maid.

But she was to be no more exercised; for Mr. Archer, disclaiming any thought of flattery, turned off to other subjects, and held her all through the wood in conversation, addressing her with an air of perfect sincerity, and listening to her answers with every mark of interest. Had open flattery continued, Nance would have soon found refuge in good sense; but the more subtle lure she could not suspect, much less avoid. It was the first time she had ever taken part in a conversation illuminated by any ideas. All was then true, that she had heard and dreamed of gentlemen; they were a race apart, like deities, knowing good and evil. And then there burst upon her soul a divine thought, hope's glorious sunrise; since she could understand, since it seemed that she, too, even she, could interest this sorrowful Apollo, might she not learn? Or was she not learning? Would not her soul awake and put forth wings? Was she not, in fact, an enchanted princess, waiting but a touch to become royal? She saw herself transformed, radiantly attired, but in exquisite taste; her face grown longer and more refined; her tint etherealized; and she heard herself, with delighted wonder, talking like a book.

Meanwhile, they had arrived at where the track comes out above the river dell, and saw in front of them the castle, faintly shadowed on the night, covering with its broken battlements a bold projection of the bank, and showing at the extreme end, where were the habitable tower and wing, some crevices of candle-light. Hence, she called loudly upon her uncle, and he was seen to issue, lantern in hand, from the tower door, and where the ruins did not intervene, to pick his way over the swarded courtyard, avoiding treacherous cellars and winding among blocks of fallen masonry. The arch of the great gate was still entire, flanked by two tottering bastions, and it was here that Jonathan met them, standing at the end of the bridge, bent somewhat forward, and blinking at them through the glow of his own lantern. Mr. Archer greeted him with civility; but the old man was in no humor of compliance. He guided the newcomer across the courtyard, glancing sharply in his face, and grumbling all the time about the cold, the discomfort and dilapidation of the castle. He was sure he hoped that Mr. Archer would like it; but in truth he could not think what brought him there.

Doubtless he had a good reason,—this with a look of cunning scrutiny,—but indeed the place was quite unfit for any person of repute; he himself was eaten up with the rheumatics. It was the most rheumaticky place in England; and some fine day, the whole habitable part (to call it habitable) would fetch away bodily and go down the slope into the river. He had seen the cracks widening; there was a plaguy issue in the bank below; he thought a spring was undermining it; it might be to-morrow, it might be next day, but they were all sure of a come down sooner or later. "And that is a poor death," said he, "for any one, let alone a gentleman, to have a whole old ruin dumped upon his belly. Have a care to your left there; these cellar vaults have all broke down, and the grass and the hemlock hide them. Well, sir, here is welcome to you, such as it is, and wishing you well away."

And with that Jonathan ushered his guest through the tower door, and down three steps on the left hand, into the kitchen, as common room of the castle. It was a huge, low room, as large as a meadow, occupying the whole width of the habitable wing, with barred windows looking on the court and into the river valley. A dresser, a table, and a few chairs, stood dotted here and there upon the uneven flags. Under the great chimney a good fire burned in an iron fire-basket; a high, old settle, rudely carved with figures and Gothic lettering, flanked it on either side; there was a hinge-table and a stone bench in the chimney-corner, and above the arch hung guns, axes, lanterns, and great sheaves of rusty keys.

Jonathan looked about him, holding up the lantern, and shrugged his shoulders with a pitying grimace. "Here it is," he said. "See the damp on the floor; look at the moss; where there is moss, you may be sure that it's rheumaticky. Try and get near that fire for to warm yourself; it'll blow the coat off your back. And with a young gentleman with a face like yours, as pale as a tallow candle, I'd be afeard of a churchyard cough and a galloping decline," said Jonathan, naming the maladies with gloomy gusto; "or the cold might strike in and turn your blood," he added.

Mr. Archer fairly laughed. "My good Mr. Holdaway," said he, "I was born with that same tallow-candle face, and the only fear that you inspire me with is the fear that I intrude unwelcomely upon your private hours. But I think I can promise you that I am very little troublesome, and I am inclined to hope that the terms which I can offer may still pay you the derangement."

"Yes, the terms," said Jonathan. "I was thinking of that. As you say, they are very small," and he shook his head.

"Unhappily, I can afford no more," said Mr. Archer. "But this we have arranged already," he added with a certain stiffness; "and as I am aware that Miss Holdaway has matter to communicate, I will, if you permit, retire at once. So, if you will show me to my room, I shall wish you a good slumber and a better awakening."

Jonathan silently gave the lantern to Nance, and she turning and courtesying in the doorway, proceeded to conduct their guest up the broad, winding staircase of the tower. He followed with a very brooding face.

"Alas," cried Nance, as she entered the room, "your fire is black out"; and setting down the lantern she clapped upon her knees before the chimney and began to rearrange the charred and still smoldering remains. Mr. Archer looked about the gaunt apartment with a sort of shudder; the great height, the bare stone, the shattered windows, the aspect of the uncurtained bed, with one of its four fluted columns broken short, all struck so chill upon his fancy. From this dismal survey his eyes turned to Nance crouching before the fire, the candle in one hand and artfully puffing at the embers; the flames as they broke forth played upon the soft outline of her cheek, she was alive and young, colored with the bright hues of life, and a woman.

He looked upon her, softening, and then sat down and continued to admire the picture.

"There, sir," said she, getting upon her feet, "your fire is doing bravely now. Good night."

He rose and held out his hand. "Come," said he, "you are my only friend in these parts, and you must shake hands."

She brushed her hand upon her skirt, and offered it blushing.

"God bless you, my dear," said he.

He opened one of the windows and stared down into the dark valley. A gentle wimpling of the river among stones ascended to his ear; the trees upon the other bank stood black against the sky; farther away, an owl was hooting. It was dreary and cold; and as he turned back to the hearth and the glow of fire, "Heavens," said he to himself, "what an unfortunate destiny is mine!"

He went to bed, but sleep only visited his pillow in uneasy snatches. Outbreaks of loud speech came up the winding staircase; he heard the old stones of the castle crack in the frosty night with sharp reverberations, and the bed complained under his tossings. Lastly, far on into the morning, he awakened from a doze, to hear, very far off, in the extreme and breathless quiet, a wailing flourish on the horn. The down mail was drawing near to the Green Dragon. He sat up in bed; the sound was tragical by distance, and the modulation appealed to his ear like human speech. It seemed to call upon him with a dreary insistence, to call him far away; to address him personally; and to have a meaning that he failed to seize. It was thus, at least, in this nodding castle, in a cold, miry woodland, and so far from men and society, that the traffic on the Great North Road spoke to him in the intervals of slumber.

III

JONATHAN HOLDAWAY

NANCE descended the tower stair, pausing at every step. She was in no hurry to confront her uncle with bad news; and she must dwell a little longer on the rich note of Mr. Archer's voice, the charm of his manner and person. But once at the stair-foot, she threw aside the spell and recovered her sensible and workaday self.

Jonathan was seated in the middle of the settle, a mug of ale beside him, in the attitude of one prepared for trouble; but he did not speak, and suffered her to fetch her supper and eat of it with a very excellent appetite in silence. When she had done, she, too, drew a tankard of home-brewed, and came and planted herself in front of him upon the settle.

"Well," said Jonathan.

"My lord has run away," said Nance.

"What!" cried the old man.

"Abroad," she continued. "Run away from creditors. He said he had not a stiver, but he was drunk enough. He said you might live on in the castle, and Mr. Archer would pay you; but you was to look for no more wages, since he would be glad of them himself."

Jonathan's face contracted; the flush of a black, bilious anger mounted to the roots of his hair; he gave an inarticulate cry, leapt upon his feet, and began rapidly pacing the stone floor.

"This man—this lord!" he shouted. "Who is he? He was born with a golden spoon in his mouth, and I with a dirty straw. He rolled in his coach when he was a baby. I have dug, and toiled, and labored, since I was that high—that high," and he shouted again. "I'm bent, and broke, and full of pains. D'ye think I don't know the taste of sweat? Many's the gallon I've drunk of it—ay! in the midwinter, toiling like a slave. All through, what has my life been? Bend, bend, bend, my old creaking back, till it would ache like breaking; wade about in the foul mire, never a dry stitch; empty belly, sore hands, hat off to my Lord Redface; kicks and ha'pence; and now, here at the hind end, when I'm worn to my poor bones—a kick and done with it." He walked a little while in silence, and then extending his hand, "Now, you Nance Holdaway," said he, "you come of my blood, and you're a good girl. When that man was a boy, I used to carry his gun for him. I carried the gun all day on my two feet, and many a stitch I had, and chewed a bullet for. He rode upon a horse with feathers in his hat; it was him that had the shots and took the game home. Did I complain? Not I. I knew my station. What did I ask, but just the chance to live and die honest? Nance Holdaway, don't let them deny it to me. Don't let them do it. I've been poor as Job, and honest as the day, but, my girl, you mark these words of mine,—I'm getting tired of it."

"I wouldn't say such words, at least," said Nance.

"You wouldn't," said the old man grimly. "Well, and did I when I was your age? Wait till your back's broke, and your hands tremble, and your eyes fail, and you're weary of the battle, and ask no more but to lie down in your bed, and give the ghost up like an honest man; and then let there up and come some insolent, ungodly fellow, —ah, if I had him in these hands, 'Where's my money that you gambled?' I should say. 'Where's my money that you drank and diced? Thief!' is what I would say; thief!" he roared. "Thief!"

"Mr. Archer will hear you, if you don't take care," said Nance; "and I would be ashamed that he should hear a brave, old, honest, hard-working man like Jonathan Holdaway, talk nonsense like a boy."

"D'ye think I mind for Mr. Archer?" he cried shrilly, with a clack of laughter; and then he came close up to her, stooped down with his two palms upon his knees, and looked her in the eyes with a strange, hard expression, something like a smile: "Do I mind for God, my girl?"

he said. "That's what it's come to be now; do I mind for God?"

"Uncle Jonathan," she said, getting up and taking him by the arm, "you sit down again where you were sitting. There, sit still, I'll have no more of this; you'll do yourself mischief. Come, take a drink of this good ale, and I'll warm a tankard for you. Ha, we'll pull through, you'll see. I'm young, as you say, and it's my turn to carry the bundle; and don't you worry your bile, as we'll have sickness, too, as well as sorrow."

"D'ye think that I'd forgotten you?" said Jonathan, with something like a groan; and thereupon his teeth clicked to, and he sat with the tankard of ale in his hand and staring straight before him.

"Why," said Nance, setting on the ale to mull, "men are always children, they say, however old; and if ever I heard a thing like this, to set to and make yourself sick, just when the money's failing. Keep a good heart up; you haven't kept a good heart these seventy years, nigh hand, to break down about a pound or two. Here's this Mr. Archer come to lodge that you disliked so much; well, now you see it was a clear Providence; come, let's think upon our mercies. And here is the ale mulling lovely, smell of it. I'll take a drop myself, it smells so sweet. And, Uncle Jonathan, you let me say one word: you've lost more than money before now, you lost my aunt, and bore it like a man. Bear this."

His face once more contracted; his fist doubled and shot forth into the air and trembled. "Let them look out!" he shouted. "Here, I warn all men; I've done with this foul kennel of knaves. Let them look out!"

"Hush, hush, for pity's sake," cried Nance.

And then all of a sudden he dropped his face into his hands and broke out with a great hiccuping, dry sob that was horrible to hear. "Oh," he cried, "my God, if my son hadn't left me; if I had a son like other fathers. He would save me now when all is breaking down. Oh, he would save me! Ay, but where is he? Raking taverns, a thief, perhaps. My curse be on him!" he added, rising again into wrath.

"Hush," cried Nance, springing to her feet. "Your boy, your dead wife's boy. Aunt Susan's baby, that she loved,—would you curse him? Oh, God forbid."

The energy of her address surprised him from his mood. He looked upon her, tearless and thoughtful. "Let me go to my bed," he said at last, and he rose and, shaking as with ague, but quite silent, lighted his candle and left the kitchen.

Poor Nance, the pleasant current of her dreams was all diverted. She beheld a golden city, where she aspired to dwell; she had spoken with a deity, and had told herself that she might rise to be his equal; and now the earthly ligaments that bound her down had been straightened. She was like a tree looking skyward: her roots were in the ground. It seemed to her a thing so coarse, so rustic, to be thus commoved about a loss in money; when Mr. Archer, fallen from the sky-level of counts and nobles, faced his changed destiny with so immovable a courage. To weary of honesty; that, at least, no one could do, but even to name it was already a disgrace, and she beheld in fancy her uncle and the young lad, all laced and feathered, hand upon hip, bestriding his small horse. The opposition seemed to perpetuate itself from generation to generation; one side still doomed to the clumsy and servile, the other born to beauty.

She thought of the golden zones, in which gentlemen were bred and figured with so excellent a grace; zones in which wisdom and smooth words, white linen and slim hands, were the mark of the desired inhabitants; where low temptations were unknown, and honesty no virtue, but a thing as natural as breathing.

IV

MINGLING THREADS

IT WAS nearly seven before Mr. Archer left his apartment. On the landing he found another door beside his own, opening on a roofless corridor, and presently he was walking on the top of the ruins. On one hand he could look down a good depth into the green courtyard; on the other, his eye roved along the downward course of the river; the wet woods all smoking; the shadows long and blue; the mists golden and rosy in the sun; here and there the water flashing across an obstacle. His heart expanded and softened to a gentle melancholy most grateful after the excitement of recent flight; and with his eye fixed upon the distance, and no thought of present danger, he continued to stroll along the elevated and treacherous promenade.

A terror-stricken cry rose to him from the courtyard; he looked down and saw, in a glimpse, Nance standing below with hands clasped in horror, and his own foot trembling on the margin of a gulf. He recoiled and leant against a pillar, quaking from head to foot and covering his face with his hands; and Nance had time to run round by the stair and rejoin him, where he stood, before he had changed a line of his position.

"Ah," he cried, and clutched her wrist, "don't leave me. The place rocks; I have no head for altitudes."

"Sit down against that pillar," said Nance. "Don't you be afraid, I won't leave you, and don't look up or down; look straight at me. How white you are."

"The gulf," he said, and closed his eyes again and shuddered.

"Why," said Nance, "what a poor climber you must be. That was where my Cousin Dick used to get out of the castle, after Uncle Jonathan had shut the gate. I've been down there myself with him helping me. I wouldn't try with you," she said, and laughed merrily.

The sound of her laughter was sincere and musical; and perhaps its beauty barbed the offense to Mr. Archer. The blood came into his face with a quick jet, and then left it paler than before. "It is a physical weakness," he said harshly, "and very droll, no doubt, but one that I can conquer on necessity. See, I am still shaking. Well, I advance to the battlements and look down. Show me your cousin's path."

"He would go sure-foot along that little edge," said Nance, pointing as she spoke; "then out through the breach, and down by yonder buttress. It is easier coming back, of course, because you can see where you are going. From the buttress foot an exceedingly steep walk goes along the scarp,—see, you can follow it from here in the dry grass. And now, sir," she added, with a touch of womanly pity, "I would come away from here if I was you, for indeed you are not fit."

Sure enough, Mr. Archer's pallor and agitation had continued to increase; his cheeks were deathly, his clenched fingers trembled pitifully. "The weakness is physical," he sighed, and had nearly fallen.

Nance led him from the spot, and he was no sooner back in the tower stair, than he fell heavily against the wall and put his arm across his eyes. A cup of brandy had to be brought him before he could descend to breakfast; and the perfection of Nance's dream was for the first time troubled.

Jonathan was waiting for them at table, with yellow, bloodshot eyes and a peculiar, dusky complexion. He hardly waited till they found their seats before raising one hand and stooping with his mouth above his plate, he put up a prayer for a blessing on the food and a spirit of gratitude in the eaters; and thereupon and without more civility fell to. But it was notable that he was no less speedily satisfied, than he had been greedy to begin. He pushed his plate away and drummed upon the table.

"There are silly prayers," said he, "that they teach us. Eat and be thankful. that's no such wonder. Speak to me of starving—there's the touch! You're a man, they tell me, Mr. Archer, that has met with some reverses?"

"I have met with many," replied Mr. Archer.

"Ha!" said Jonathan, "none reckons but the last. Now, see; I tried to make this girl here understand me."

"Uncle," said Nance, "what should Mr. Archer care for your concerns? He hath troubles of his own, and came to be at peace, I think."

"I tried to make her understand me," repeated Jonathan, doggedly; and now I'll try you. Do you think this world is fair?"

"Fair and false," quoth Mr. Archer.

The old man laughed immoderately. "Good," said he; "very good, but what I mean is this: Do you know what it is to get up early and go to bed late, and never take so much as a holiday but four, and one of these your own marriage day, and the other three the funerals of folk you loved? and all that to have a quiet old age in shelter, and bread for your old belly, and a bed to lay your crazy bones upon, with a clear conscience?"

"Sir," said Mr. Archer, with an inclination of his head, "you portray a very brave existence."

"Well," continued Jonathan, "and in the end, thieves deceive you; thieves rob and rook you; thieves turn you out, in your gray old age, and send you begging. What have you got for all your honesty? A fine return! You that might have stole scores of pounds, there you are, out in the rain with your rheumatics!"

Mr. Archer had forgotten to eat; with his hand upon his chin, he was studying the old man's countenance. "And you conclude?" he asked.

"Conclude!" cried Jonathan; "I conclude I'll be upsides with them."

"Ay," said the other, "we are all tempted to revenge."

"You have lost money?" asked Jonathan.

"A great estate," said Archer quietly.

"See now!" says Jonathan, "and where is it?"

"Nay, I sometimes think that every one has had his share of it but me," was the repy. "All England hath paid his taxes with my patrimony; I was a sheep that left my wool on every brier."

"And you sit down under that?" cried the old man. "Come now, Mr. Archer, you and me belong to different stations; and I know mine—no man better, but since we have both been rooked, and are both sore with it, why, here's my hand with a very good heart, and I ask for yours, and no offense, I hope."

"There is surely no offense, my friend," returned Mr. Archer, as they shook hands across the table; "for, believe me, my sympathies are quite acquired to you. This life is an arena where we fight with beasts; and indeed," he added, sighing, "I sometimes marvel why we go down to it unarmed."

In the mean while, a creaking of ungreased axles had been heard descending through the wood; and presently after, the door opened and the tall hostler entered the kitchen carrying one end of Mr. Archer's trunks. The other was carried by an aged beggarman of that district, known and welcome for some twenty miles about under the name of Old Cumberland. Each was soon perched upon a settle, with a cup of ale; and the hostler, who valued himself upon his affability, began to entertain the company, still with half an eye on Nance, to whom, in gallant terms, he expressly dedicated every sip of ale. First, he told of the trouble they had to get his lordship started in the chaise; and how he had dropped a rouleau of gold on the threshold, and the passage and door-step had been strewn with guinea pieces. At this, old Jonathan looked at Mr. Archer. Next the visitor turned to news of a more thrilling character: how the down mail had been stopped again near Grantham by three men on horseback—a white and two bays; how they had handkerchiefs on their faces; how Tom, the guard's blunderbuss, missed fire, but he swore he had winged one of them with a pistol, and how they had got clean away, with seventy pounds in money, some valuable papers, and a watch or two.

"Brave, brave!" cried Jonathan, in ecstasy. "Seventy pounds! Oh, it's brave!"

"Well, I don't see the great bravery," observed the hostler, misapprehending him. "Three men, and you may call that three to one. I'll call it brave when some one stops the mail single-handed; that's a risk."

"And why should they hesitate?" inquired Mr. Archer. "The poor souls who are fallen to such a way of life, pray, what have they to lose? If they get the money, well; but if a ball should put them from their troubles, why, so much the better."

"Well, sir," said the hostler, "I believe you'll find they won't agree with you. They count on a good fling, you see; or who would risk it? And here's my best respects to you, Miss Nance."

"And I forgot the part of cowardice," resumed Mr. Archer. "All men fear."

"Oh, surely not," cried Nance.

"All men," reiterated Mr. Archer.

"Ay, that's a true word," observed Old Cumberland, "and a thief, anyway; for it's a coward's trade."

"But these fellows, now," said Jonathan, with a curious, appealing manner,—"these fellows with their seventy pounds!—perhaps, Mr. Archer, they were no true thieves after all, but just people who had been robbed and tried to get their own again. What was that you said about all England and the taxes? One takes, another gives; why, that's almost fair. If I've been rooked and robbed, and the coat taken off my back, I call it almost fair to take another's."

"Ask Old Cumberland," observed the hostler, "you ask Old Cumberland, Miss Nance!" and he bestowed a wink upon his favored fair one.

"Why that?" asked Jonathan.

"He had his coat taken, ay, and his shirt, too," returned the hostler.

"Is that so?" cried Jonathan, eagerly. "Was you robbed, too?"

"That was I," replied Cumberland, "with a warrant! I was a well-to-do man when I was young."

"Ay! See that!" says Jonathan. "And you don't long for a revenge?"

"Eh! Not me!" answered the beggar. "It's too long ago. But if you'll give me another mug of your good ale, my pretty lady, I won't say no to that."

"And shalt have! And shalt have!" cried Jonathan; "or brandy even, if you like it better."

And as Cumberland did like it better, and the hostler chimed in, the party pledged each other in a dram of brandy before separating.

As for Nance, she slipped forth into the ruins, partly to avoid the hostler's gallantries, partly to lament over the defects of Mr. Archer. Plainly, he was no hero! She pitied him; she began to feel a protecting interest mingle with and almost supersede her admiration, and was at the same time disappointed and yet drawn to him. She was, indeed, conscious of such unshaken fortitude in her own heart that she was almost tempted by an occasion to be bold for two. She saw herself, in a brave attitude, shielding her imperfect hero from the world; and she saw, like a piece of heaven, his gratitude for her protection.

V

LIFE IN THE CASTLE

FROM that day forth the life of these three persons in the ruins ran very smoothly. Mr. Archer now sat by the fire with a book, and now passed whole days abroad, returning late, dead weary. His manner was a mask, but it was half transparent; through the even tenor of his gravity and courtesy, profound revolutions of feeling were betrayed, seasons of numb despair, of restlessness, of aching temper. For days he would say nothing beyond his usual courtesies and solemn compliments; and then all of a sudden, some fine evening beside the kitchen fire, he would fall into a vein of elegant gossip, tell of strange and interesting events, the secrets of families, brave deeds of war, the miraculous discovery of crime, the visitations of the dead. Nance and her uncle would sit till the small hours with eyes wide open; Jonathan applauding the unexpected incidents with many a slap of his big hand; Nance perhaps more pleased with the narrator's eloquence and wise reflections; and then, again, days would follow of abstraction; of listless bearing; of apologies and long hours of silence. Once only, and then after a week of unrelieved melancholy, he went over to the Green Dragon; spent the afternoon with the landlord and a bowl of punch, and returned as on the first night, devious in step, but courteous and unperturbed of speech.

If he seemed more natural and more at his ease, it was when he found Nance alone, and laying by some part of his reserve, talked before her, rather than to her, of his destiny, character, and hopes. To Nance these interviews were but a doubtful privilege. At times he would seem to take a pleasure in her presence, to consult her gravely, to hear and discuss her counsels; at times, even, but these were rare and brief, he would talk of herself, praise the qualities that she possessed, touch indulgently on her defects, and lend her books to read and even examine her upon her reading; but far more often he would fall into a half unconsciousness, put her a question and then answer it himself, drop into the veiled tone of voice of one soliloquizing, and leave her at last as though he had forgotten her existence. It was odd, too, that in all this random converse, not a fact of his past life, and scarce a name, should ever cross his lips. A profound reserve kept watch upon his most unguarded moments. He spoke continually of himself, indeed, but still in enigmas: the veiled prophet of egoism.

The base of Nance's feelings for Mr. Archer was admiration as for a superior being; and with this his treatment, consciously or not, accorded happily. When he forgot her, she took that this essential brutality stood excused. His compliments, besides, were always grave and rational; he would offer reason for his praise; convict her of merit, and thus disarm suspicion. Nay, and the very hours when he forgot and remembered her alternately, could by the ardent fallacies of youth, be read in the light of an attention. She might be far from his confidence; but still she was nearer it than any one. He might ignore her presence, but yet he sought it.

Moreover, she, upon her side, was conscious of one point of superiority. Beside this rather dismal, rather effeminate man, who recoiled from a worm, who grew giddy on the castle wall, who bore so helplessly the weight of his misfortunes, she felt herself a head and shoulders taller in cheerful and sterling courage. She could walk, head in air, along the most precarious rafter; her hand feared neither the grossness nor the harshness of life's web, but was thrust cheerfully, if need were, into the brier bush, and could take hold of any crawling horror. Ruin was mining the walls of her cottage, as already it had mined and subverted Mr. Archer's palace; well, she faced it with a bright countenance and a busy hand; she had got some washing, some rough seamstress work from the Green Dragon, and from another neighbor ten miles across the moor; at this she cheerfully labored, and from that height she could afford to pity the useless talents and poor attitude of Mr. Archer. It did not change her admiration; but it made it bearable. He was above her in all ways; but she was above him in one. She kept it to herself, and hugged it. When, like all young creatures, she made long stories to justify, to nourish, and to prognose the course of her affection, it was this private superiority that made all rosy, that cut the knot, and that, at last in some great situation, fetched to her knees the dazzling but imperfect hero. With this pretty exercise she beguiled the hours of labor, and consoled herself for Mr. Archer's bearing. Pity was her weapon and her weakness; to accept the loved one's faults, although it has an air of freedom, is to kiss the chain, and this pity it was which, lying nearer to her heart, lent the one element of true emotion to a fanciful and brain-sick love.

Thus it fell out that one day she had gone to the Green Dragon and brought back thence a letter to Mr. Archer. He, upon seeing it, winced like a man under the knife; pain, shame, sorrow, and the most trenchant edge of mortification, cut into his heart and wrung the steady composure of his face.

"Dear heart, have you bad news?" she cried.

But he only replied by a gesture and fled to his room; and when, later on, she ventured to refer to it, he stopped her on the threshold, as if with words prepared beforehand. "There are some pains," said he, "too acute for consolation, or I would bring them to my kind consoler. Let the memory of that letter, if you please, be buried." And then, as she continued to gaze at him, being, in spite of herself, pained by the elaborate and doubtfully sincere in word and matter: "Let it be enough," he added haughtily, "that if this matter wring my heart, it doth not touch my conscience. I am a man, I would have you to know, who suffers undeservedly."

He had never spoken so directly; never with so convincing an emotion; and her heart thrilled for him. She could have taken his pains and died of them, with joy.

Meanwhile, she was left without support. Jonathan now swore by his lodger, and lived for him. He was a fine talker. He knew the finest sight of stories; he was a man and a gentleman, take him for all in all, and a perfect credit to Old England. Such were the old man's declared sentiments, and sure enough he clung to Mr. Archer's side, hung upon his utterance when he spoke, and watched him with unwearying interest when he was silent. And yet his feeling was not clear; in the partial wreck of his mind, which was leaning to decay, some afterthought was strongly present. As he gazed in Mr. Archer's face, sudden brightness would kindle in his rheumy eyes, his eyebrows would lift, as with a sudden thought; his mouth would open as though to speak, and close again on silence. Once or twice he even called Mr. Archer mysteriously forth into the dark courtyard, took him by the button, and laid a demonstrative finger on his chest; but there his ideas or his courage failed him; he would shufflingly excuse himself and return to his position by the fire without a word of explanation. "The good man was growing old," said Mr. Archer, with a suspicion of a shrug. But the good man had his idea, and even when he was alone, the name of Mr. Archer fell from his lips continually in the course of mumbled and gesticulative conversation.

VI

THE BAD HALF-CROWN

HOWEVER early Nance arose, and she was no sluggard, the old man, who had begun to outlive the earthly habit of slumber, would usually have been up long before, the fire would be burning brightly, and she would see him wandering among the ruins, lantern in hand, and talking assiduously to himself. One day, however, after he had returned late from the market-town, she found she had stolen a march upon that indefatigable early riser. The kitchen was all blackness. She crossed the castle yard to the wood-cellar, her steps printing the thick hoar frost. A scathing breeze blew out of the northeast, and slowly carried a regiment of black and tattered clouds over the face of heaven, which was already kindled with the wild light of morning, but where she walked, in shelter of the ruins, the flame of her candle burned steady. The extreme cold smote upon her conscience. She could not bear to think this bitter business fell usually to the lot of one so old as Jonathan, and made desperate resolutions to be earlier in the future.

The fire was a good blaze before he entered, limping dismally into the kitchen. "Nance," said he, "I be all knotted up with the rheumatics; will you rub me a bit?" She came and rubbed him where and how he bade her. "This is a cruel thing that old age should be rheumaticky," said he. "When I was young, I stood my turn of the teethache like a man; for why? because it couldn't last forever, but these rheumatics come to live and die with you. Your aunt was took before the time came; never had an ache to mention. Now I lie all night in my single bed and the blood never warms in me; this knee of mine it seems like lighted up with the rheumatics; it seems as though you could see to sew by it; and all the strings of the old loveache as if devils was pulling 'em. Thank you, kindly; that's someways easier now, but an old man, my dear, has little to look for; it's pain, pain, pain to the end of the business, and I'll never be rightly warm again 'til I get under sod," he said, and looked down at her with a face so aged and weary that she had nearly wept.

"I lay awake all night," he continued; "I do so mostly, and a long walk kills me. Eh, deary me, to think that life should run to such a puddle! And I remember long syne when I was strong, and the blood all hot and good about me, and I loved to run, too, deary me, to run! Well, that's all by. You'd better pray to be took early, Nance, and not live on 'til you get to be like me, and are robbed in your gray old age, your cold, shivering, dark old age, that's like a winter's morning," and he bitterly shuddered, spreading his hands before the fire.

"Come, now," said Nance, "the more you say, the less you'll like it, Uncle Jonathan; but, if I were you, I would be proud; for to have lived all your days honest and beloved, and come near the end with your good name, isn't that a fine thing to be proud of? Mr. Archer was telling me, in some strange land they used to run races, each with a lighted candle, and the art was to keep the candle burning. Well, now, I thought that was like life; a man's good conscience is the flame he gets to carry, and if he come to the winning-post with that still burning, why, take it how you will, the man's a hero—whereall if he was low-born, like you and me."

"Did Mr. Archer tell you that?" asked Jonathan.

"No, dear," said she, "that's my own thought about it. He told me of the race. But see, now," she continued, putting on the porridge, "you say old age is a hard season, but so is youth. You're half out of the battle, I would say; you loved my aunt, and got her, and buried her, and some of these days soon you'll go to meet her, and take her my love and tell her I tried to take good care of you; for so I do, Uncle Jonathan."

Jonathan struck with his fist upon the settle. "D'ye think I want to die, ye vixen!" he shouted. "I want to live ten hundred years."

This was a mystery beyond Nance's penetration, and she stared in wonder as she made the porridge.

"I want to live," he continued. "I want to live and to grow rich. I want to drive my carriage, and to dice in hells, and see the king, I do. Is this a life that I lived? I want to be a rake, d'ye understand? I want to know what things are like. I don't want to die like a blind kitten, and me seventy-six."

"Oh, fie!" said Nance.

The old man thrust out his jaw at her, with the grimace of an irreverent schoolboy upon that aged face. It seemed a blasphemy. Then he took out of his bosom a long leather purse, and emptying its contents on the settle, began to count and recount the pieces, ringing and examining each, and suddenly he leapt like a young man. "What!" he screamed. "Bad! O Lord, I'm robbed again!" And falling on his knees before the settle, he began to pour forth the most dreadful curses on the head of his deceiver.

His eyes were shut, for to him this vile solemnity was prayer. He held up the bad half-crown in his right hand, as though he were displaying it to heaven, and what increased the horror of the scene, the curses he invoked were those whose efficacy he had tasted: old age and poverty, rheumatism and an ungrateful son. Nance listened appalled; then she sprang forward and dragged down his arm and laid her hand upon his mouth.

"Whist!" she cried. "Whist ye, for God's sake! Oh, my man, whist ye! If Heaven were to hear, if poor Aunt Susan were to hear! Think, she may be listening!" And with the histrionism of strong emotion she pointed to a corner of the kitchen.

His eyes followed her finger. He looked there for a little, thinking, blinking; then he got stiffly to his feet and resumed his place upon the settle, the bad piece still in his hand. So he sat for some time, looking upon the half-crown, and now wondering to himself on the injustice and partiality of the law, now computing again and again the nature of his loss; so he was still sitting when Mr. Archer entered the kitchen. At this, a light came into his face;

and after some seconds of rumination he despatched Nance upon an errand.

"Mr. Archer," said he, as soon as they were alone together, "would you give me a guinea piece for silver?"

"Why, sir, I believe I can," said Mr. Archer.

And the exchange was just effected when Nance reentered the apartment. The blood shot into her face. "What's to do here?" she asked rudely.

"Nothing, my dearie," said old Jonathan, with a touch of whine.

"What's to do?" she said again.

"Your uncle was but changing me a piece of gold," returned Mr. Archer.

"Let me see what he hath given you, Mr. Archer!" replied the girl. "I had a bad piece, and I fear it is mixed up among the good."

"Well, well," replied Mr. Archer, smiling, "I must take the merchant's risk of it. The money is now mixed."

"I know my piece," quoth Nance. "Come, let me see your silver, Mr. Archer! If I have to get it by a theft, I'll see that money," she cried.

"Nay, child, if you put as much passion to be honest as the world to steal, I must give way, though I betray myself," said Mr. Archer. "There it is as I received it."

Nance quickly found the bad half-crown. "Give him another," she said, looking Jonathan in the face, and when that had been done, she walked over to the chimney and flung the guilty piece into the reddest of the fire; its base constituents began immediately to run; even as she watched it, the disk crumpled and the lineaments of the king became confused. Jonathan, following close behind, beheld these changes from over her shoulder, and his face darkened sorely.

"Now," said she, "come back to table, and to-day it is that I shall say grace, as I used to do in old times, day about with Dick," and covering her eyes with one hand, "O Lord," said she, with deep emotion, "make us thankful; and O Lord, deliver us from evil! For the love of the poor souls that watch for us in heaven, O deliver us from evil."

VII

THE BLEACHING GREEN

THE year moved on to March; and March, though it blew bitter keen from the North Sea, yet blinked kindly between whiles on the river dell. The mire dried up in the closest covert; life ran in the bare branches, and the air of the afternoon would be suddenly sweet with the fragrance of new grass.

Above and below the castle the river crooked like the letter S. The lower loop was to the left, and embraced the high and steep projection which was crowned by the ruins; the upper loop enclosed a lawny promontory, fringed by thorn and willow. It was easy to reach it from the castle side; for the river ran in this part very quietly among innumerable boulders and over dam-like walls of rock. The place was all enclosed, the wind a stranger, the turf smooth and solid; so it was chosen by Nance to be her bleaching green.

One day she brought a basket full of linen, and had but begun to wring and lay them out, when Mr. Archer stepped from the thicket on the far side, drew very deliberately near, and sat down in silence on the grass. Nance looked up to greet him with a smile, but finding her smile was not returned, she fell into embarrassment and stuck the more busily to her employment. Man or woman, the whole world looks well at any work to which they are accustomed, but the girl was ashamed of what she did. She was ashamed, besides, of the sunbonnet that so well became her, and ashamed of her bare arms, which were her greatest beauty.

"Nausicaa," said Mr. Archer at last, "I find you like Nausicaa."

"And who is she?" asked Nance, and laughed in spite of herself, an empty and embarrassed laugh that sounded in Mr. Archer's ears, indeed, like music, but to her own like the last grossness of rusticity.

"She was a princess of the Grecian islands," he replied. "A king being shipwrecked, found her washing by the shore. Certainly I, too, was shipwrecked," he continued, plucking at the grass. "There never was a more desperate castaway; to fall from polite life, fortune, a shrine of honor, a grateful conscience, duties willingly taken up and faithfully discharged; and to fall to this—idleness, poverty, remorse." He seemed to have forgotten her presence, but here he remembered her again. "Nance," said he, "would you have a man sit down and suffer or rise up and strive?"

"Nay," she said, "I would always rather see him doing."

"Ha!" said Mr. Archer, "but yet you speak from an imperfect knowledge. Conceive a man damned to a choice of only evil; misconduct upon either side, not a fault behind him, and yet naught before him but this choice of sins. How would you say then?"

"I would say that he was much deceived, Mr. Archer," returned Nance. "I would say there was a third choice, and that the right one."

"I tell you," said Mr. Archer, "the man I have in view hath two ways open and no more. One to wait like a poor mewling baby until fate save or ruin him; the other to take his troubles in his hand, and to perish or be saved at once. It is no point of morals; both are wrong. Either way this stepchild of Providence must fall; which shall he choose, by doing, or not doing?"

"Fall, then, is what I should say," replied Nance. "Fall where you will, but do it! For O, Mr. Archer," she continued stooping to her work, "you that are good and kind, and so wise, it doth sometimes go against my heart to see you live on here like a sheep in a turnip field. If you were braver—" and here she paused, conscience-smitten.

"Do I indeed lack courage?" inquired Mr. Archer himself. "Courage, the footstool of the virtues, upon which they stand. Courage, that a poor private carrying a musket has to spare of; that does not fail a weasel or a rat; that is a brutish faculty? I to fail there? I wonder.

But what is courage, then? The constancy to endure oneself, or to see others suffer? The itch of ill-advised activity: mere shuttle-wittedness? or to be still and patient? To inquire of the significance of words is to rob ourselves of what we seem to know, and yet, of all things, certainly to stand still is the least heroic. Nance," he said, "did you ever hear of Hamlet?"

"Never," said Nance.

"'Tis an old play," returned Mr. Archer, "and frequently enacted. This while I have been talking Hamlet. You must know this Hamlet was a prince among the Danes"; and he told her the play in a very good style, here and there quoting a verse or two with solemn emphasis.

"It is strange," said Nance. "He was then a very poor creature?"

"That was what he could not tell," said Mr. Archer. "Look at me. Am I as poor a creature?"

She looked, and what she saw was the familiar thought of all her hours: the tall figure very plainly habited in black, the spotless ruffles, the slim hands; the long, well-shapen, serious, shaven face, the wide and somewhat thin-lipped mouth, the dark eyes that were so full of depth, and change, and color. He was gazing at her with his brows a little knit, his chin upon one hand, and that elbow resting on his knee.

"Ye look a man!" she cried. "Ay, and should be a great one! The more shame to you to lie here idle, like a dog before the fire."

"My fair Holdaway," quoth Mr. Archer, "you are much set on action. I can not dig, to beg I am ashamed." He continued looking at her with a half-absent fixity. "'Tis a strange thing, certainly, that in my years of fortune I should never taste happiness, and now, when I am broke, enjoy so much of it, for was I ever happier than to-day? Was the grass softer, the stream pleasanter in sound, the air milder, the heart more at peace? Why should I not sink? To dig—why, after all, it should be easy. To take a mate, too? Love is of all grades since Jupiter; love fails to none; and children—" but here he passed his hand suddenly over his eyes. "Oh, fool and coward, fool and coward," he said bitterly, "can you forget your fetters? You did not know that I was fettered, Nance?" he asked, again addressing her.

But Nance was somewhat sore. "I know you keep talking," she said, and turning half away from him, began to wring out a sheet across her shoulder. "I wonder you are not wearied of your voice. When the hands lie abed, the tongue takes a walk."

Mr. Archer laughed unpleasantly, rose and moved to the water's edge. In this part, the body of the river poured across a little narrow fall, ran some ten feet very smoothly over a bed of pebbles, then getting wind, as it were, of another shelf of rock which barred the channel, began, by imperceptible degrees, to separate toward either shore in dancing currents, and to leave the middle clear and stagnant. The set toward either side was nearly equal; about one-half of the whole water plunged, on the side of the castle, through a narrow nozle; about one-half ran lipping past the margin of the green, and slipped across a babbling rapid.

"Here," said Mr. Archer, after he had looked for some time at the fine and shifting demarcation of these currents, "come here and see me try my fortune."

"I am not like a man," said Nance. "I have no time to waste."

"Come here," he said again, "I ask you seriously, Nance. We are not always childish when we seem so."

She drew a little nearer.

"Now," said he, "you see these two channels; choose one."

"I'll choose the nearest to save time," said Nance.

"Well, that shall be for action," returned Mr. Archer; "and since I wish to have the odds against me, not only the other channel, but yon stagnant water in the midst, shall be for lying still. You see this?" he continued, pulling up a withered rush, "I break it in three. I shall put each separately at the top of the upper fall, and according as they go by your way, or by the other, I shall guide my life."

"This is very silly," cried Nance, with a movement of her shoulders.

"I do not think it so," said Mr. Archer.

"And then," she resumed, "if you are to try your fortune, why not evenly?"

"Nay," returned Mr. Archer with a smile, "no man can put complete reliance in blind fate; he must still cog the dice."

By this time he had got upon the rock beside the upper fall, and bidding her look out, dropped a piece of rush into the middle of the intake. The rusty fragment was sucked at once over the fall, came up again far on the right hand, leaned ever more and more in the same direction, and disappeared under the hanging grasses on the castle side.

"One," said Mr. Archer. "One for standing still."

But the next launch had a different fate, and after hanging for a while about the edge of the stagnant water, steadily approached the bleaching green and danced down the rapid under Nance's eyes.

"One for me," she cried with some exultation; and then she observed that Mr. Archer had grown pale, and was kneeling on the rock with his hand raised like a person petrified. "Why," said she, "you do not mind it, do you?"

"Does a man not mind a throw of dice by which a fortune hangs?" said Mr. Archer, rather hoarsely. "And this is more than fortune. Nance, if you have any kindness for my fate, put up a prayer before I launch the next one."

"A prayer," she cried, "about a game like this? I would not be so heathen."

"Well," said he, "then without," and he closed his eyes and dropped the piece of rush. This time there was no doubt. It went for the rapid as straight as any arrow.

"Action, then," said Mr. Archer, getting to his feet, and then, "God forgive us," he added, almost to himself.

"God forgive us, indeed," cried Nance, "for wasting the good daylight. But come, Mr. Archer, if I see you look so serious, I shall begin to think you was in earnest."

"Nay," he said, turning upon her suddenly with a full smile, "but is not this good advice? I have consulted God and demigod; the nymph of the river, and what I far more admire and trust, my blue-eyed Minerva. Both have said the same. My own heart was telling it already. Action, then be mine; and into the deep sea with all this paralyzing casuistry. I am happy to-day for the first time."

VIII

THE MAIL GUARD

SOMEWHERE about two in the morning a squall had burst upon the castle; a clap of screaming wind that made the towers rock, and a copious drift of rain that streamed from the windows. The wind soon blew itself out, but the day broke cloudy and dripping; and when the little party assembled at breakfast, their humors appeared to have changed with the change of weather. Nance had been brooding on the scene at the riverside, applying it in various ways to her particular aspirations; and the result, which was hardly to her mind, had taken the color out of her cheeks. Mr. Archer, too, was somewhat absent. His thoughts were of a mingled strain; and even upon his usually impassive countenance there were betrayed successive depths of depression and starts of exultation, which the girl translated in terms of her own hopes and fears. But Jonathan was the most altered; he was strangely silent, hardly passing a word, and watched Mr. Archer with an eager and furtive eye. It seemed as if the idea that had so long hovered before him had now taken a more solid shape; and while it still attracted, somewhat alarmed his imagination.

At this rate, conversation languished into a silence, which was only broken by the gentle and ghostly noises of the rain on the stone roof and about all that field of ruins; and they were all relieved when the note of a man whistling and the sound of approaching footsteps in the grassy court announced a visitor. It was the hostler from the Green Dragon bringing a letter for Mr. Archer. Nance saw her hero's face contract and then relax again at the sight of it; and she thought that she knew why, for the sprawling, gross characters of the address were easily distinguishable from the writing on the former letter that had so much disturbed him. He opened it and began to read; while the hostler sat down to table with a pot of ale, and proceeded to make himself agreeable after his fashion.

"Fine doings down our way, Miss Nance," said he. "I haven't been abed this blessed night."

Nance expressed a polite interest, but her eye was on Mr. Archer, who was reading his letter with a face of such extreme indifference that she was tempted to suspect him of assumption.

"Yes," continued the hostler, "not been the like of it this fifteen years, the North Mail stopped at the three stones."

Jonathan's cup was at his lip, but at this moment he choked with a great splutter; and Mr. Archer, as if startled by the noise, made so sudden a movement that one corner of the sheet tore off and stayed between his finger and thumb. It was some little time before the old man was sufficiently recovered to beg the hostler to go on, and he still kept coughing, and crying, and rubbing his eyes.

Mr. Archer, on his side, laid the letter down, and putting his hands in his pockets, listened gravely to the tale.

"Yes," resumed Sam, "the North Mail was stopped by a single horseman; dash my wig, but I admire him! There were four insides and two out, and poor Tom Oglethorpe the guard. Tom showed himself a man; let fly his blunderbuss at him; had him covered, too, and could swear to that; but the captain never let on, up with a pistol and fetched poor Tom through the body. Tom, he squelched from the seat, all over blood. Up comes the captain to the window. 'Oblige me,' says he, 'with what you have.' Would you believe it, not a man says cheep,—not them. They hands over about all they had, four watches, rings, snuff-boxes, seven and forty pounds overhead in gold. One Dicksee, a grazier, tries it on, gives him a guinea. 'Beg your pardon,' says the captain, 'I think too highly of you to take it at your hand. I will not take less than ten from such a gentleman. This Dicksee had his money in his stocking, but there was the pistol at his eye; down he goes, off with his stocking, and there was thirty golden guineas. 'Now,' says the captain, 'you've tried it on with me, but I scorns the like. Ten, I said,' he says, 'and ten I take.' So, dash my buttons, I call that man a man," cried Sam, in cordial admiration.

"Well, and then?" says Mr. Archer.

"Then," resumed Sam, "that old, fat fuggot, Engleton, him as held the ribbons and drew up like a lamb when he was told to, picks up his cattle and drives off again. Down they came to the Dragon, all singing like as if they was scolded; and poor Tom singing nothing. You would 'a' thought they had all lost the king's crown t' hear them. Down gets this Dicksee. 'Postmaster,' he says, taking him by the arm, 'this is a most abominable thing.' Down gets a Major Clayton and gets the old man by the other arm. 'We've been robbed!' he cries, 'robbed!' Down gets the others, and all round the old man, telling their story, and what they had lost, and how they was all as good as ruined; till at last old Engleton says, says he, 'How about Oglethorpe,' says he; 'Ay,' says the others, 'how about the guard?' Well, with that, we bousted him down, as white as a rag and all blood-red like a sop; I thought he was dead. Well, he ain't dead, but he's dying, I fancy."

"Did you say four watches?" said Jonathan.

"Four, I think; I wish it had been forty," cried Sam; "such a party of soured herrings I never did see; not a man among them but poor Tom. But us that are the servants on the road have all the risk and none of the profit."

"And this brave fellow," asked Mr. Archer, very quietly, "this Oglethorpe, how is he now?"

"Well, sir, with my respects, I take it he has a bullet hole bang through him," said Sam. "The doctor hasn't been yet. He'd been bright and early if it had been a passenger. But doctor or no, I'll make a good guess that Tom won't see to-morrow. He'll die on a Sunday, will poor Tom, and they do say that's fortunate."

"Did Tom see him that did it?" asked Jonathan.

"Well he saw him," replied Sam, "but not to swear by.

Said he was a very tall man, and very big, and had a 'andkerchief about his face, and a very quick shot, and sat his horse like a thorough gentleman, as he is."

"A gentleman," cried Nance. "The dirty knave."

"Well, I calls a man like that a gentleman," returned the hostler; "that's what I mean by a gentleman."

"You don't know much of them, then," said Nance. "A gentleman would scorn to stoop to such a thing. I call my uncle a better gentleman than any thief."

"You are right," said Mr. Archer.

"How many snuff-boxes did he get?" asked Jonathan.

"Oh, dang me, if I know," said Sam.

"I will go back with you," said Mr. Archer. "I should like to see poor Oglethorpe; he has behaved well."

"At your service, sir," said Sam, jumping to his feet. "I dare to say a gentleman like you would not forget a poor fellow like Tom; no, nor a plain man like me, sir, that went without his sleep to nurse him. And, excuse me, sir, you won't forget about the letter, neither?"

"Surely not," said Mr. Archer.

Oglethorpe lay in a low bed, one of several in a long garret of the inn. The rain soaked in through places in the roof, and fell in minuter drops; there was but one small window; the beds were occupied by servants; the air of the garret was both close and chilly. Mr. Archer's heart sank at the threshold to see a man dying, perhaps mortally hurt, in so poor a sick-room; and, as he drew near the low bed, he took his hat off. The guard was a big, blowzy, innocent-looking soul, with a thick lip and a broad nose, comically turned up; his cheeks were crimson, and when Mr. Archer laid a finger on his brow, he found him burning with fever.

"I fear you suffer much," said he, with a catch in his voice, as he sat down on the bedside.

"I suppose I do, sir," returned Oglethorpe; "it is a main sore."

"I am used to wounds and wounded men," returned the visitor; "I have been in the wars, and nursed brave fellows before; and, will you suffer me, I propose to stay beside you till the doctor comes."

"It's very good of you, sir, I am sure," said Oglethorpe. "The trouble is they won't none of them let me drink."

"If you will not tell the doctor," said Mr. Archer, "I will give you some water. They say it is bad for a green wound, but in the lower countries we all drank water when we found the chance, and I could never perceive we were the worse for it."

"Been wounded yourself, perhaps?"

"Twice," said Mr. Archer, "and was as proud of these hurts as any lady of her bracelets. 'Tis a fine thing to smart for one's duty; even in the pangs of it there is contentment."

"Ah, well," replied the guard, "if you've been shot yourself that explains it. But as for contentment, why, sir, you see, it smarts as you say; and then, I have a good wife, you see, and a bit of a brat—a little thing, so high."

"Don't move," said Mr. Archer.

"No, sir, I will not; and thank you kindly," said Oglethorpe. "At York they are; a very good lass is my wife,—too good for me, and the little rascal,—I don't know how to say it, but he sort of comes around you. If I were to go, sir, it would be hard on my poor girl."

"You must feel bitter to the rogue that laid you here," said Mr. Archer.

"Why, no, sir; more against Engleton," replied the guard. "He played his hand, if you come to look at it; my, I wish he had shot more, or me better. And yet, I'll go to my grave, but what I covered him," he cried. "It looks like witchcraft. I'll go to my grave—but what he was drove full of slugs like a pepper-box."

"Quietly," said Mr. Archer: "you must not excite yourself. These deceptions are very usual in war; the eye, in a moment of alert, is hardly to be trusted, and when the smoke blows away you see the man you fired at, taking aim, it may be, at yourself. You should observe that you were in the dark night, somewhat dazzled by the lamps, and that the sudden stopping of the wind had jolted you. In such circumstances, a man may miss and no blame attach to his marksmanship."

[Mr. Stevenson's MS. breaks off abruptly at this point. The fragment was found among Mr. Stevenson's papers after his death. It is new to me, although I well remember how much the general idea of a romance of the highway used, from early days, to dwell in the writer's mind, and especially how much it used to be debated between himself and our common friend, Mr. W. E. Henley.—SYDNEY COLVIN.]

MEMOIR OF FLEEMING JENKIN

AUTHOR'S NOTE

*On the death of **Fleeming Jenkin**, his family and friends determined to publish a selection of his various papers; by way of introduction, the following pages were drawn up; and the whole, forming two considerable volumes, has been issued in England. In the States, it has not been thought advisable to reproduce the whole; and the memoir appearing alone, shorn of that other matter which was at once its occasion and its justification, so large an account of a man so little known may seem to a stranger out of all proportion. But Jenkin was a man much more remarkable than the mere bulk or merit of his work approves him. It was in the world, in the commerce of friendship, by his brave attitude toward life, by high moral value and unwearied intellectual effort, that he struck the minds of his contemporaries. His was an individual figure, such as authors delight to draw, and all men to read of, in the pages of a novel. His was a face worth painting for its own sake. If the sitter shall not seem to have justified the portrait, if Jenkin, after his death, shall not continue to make new friends, the fault will be altogether mine.*

R. L. S.

SARANAC, *Oct.*, 1887.

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MEMOIR OF FLEEMING JENKIN

CHAPTER I

The Jenkins of Stowting—Fleeming's grandfather—Mrs. Buckner's fortune—Fleeming's father; goes to sea; at St. Helena; meets King Tom; service in the West Indies; end of his career—The Campbell-Jacksons—Fleeming's mother—Fleeming's uncle John

IN THE reign of Henry VIII, a family of the name of Jenkin, claiming to come from York, and bearing the arms of Jenkin ap Philip of St. Melans, are found reputably settled in the county of Kent. Persons of strong genealogical pinion pass from William Jenkin, Mayor of Folkestone in 1555, to his contemporary "John Jenkin, of the Citie of York, Receiver General of the County," and thence, by way of Jenkin ap Philip, to the proper summit of any Cambrian pedigree—a prince; "Guaith Voeth, Lord of Cardigan," the name and style of him. It may suffice, however, for the present, that these Kentish Jenkins must have undoubtedly derived from Wales, and being a stock of some efficiency, they struck root and grew to wealth and consequence in their new home.

Of their consequence we have proof enough in the fact that not only was William Jenkin (as already mentioned) Mayor of Folkestone in 1555, but no less than twenty-three times in the succeeding century and a half, a Jenkin (William, Thomas, Henry, or Robert) sat in the same place of humble honor. Of their wealth we know that in the reign of Charles I, Thomas Jenkin of Eythorne was more than once in the market buying land, and notably, in 1633, acquired the manor of Stowting Court. This was an estate of some 320 acres, six miles from Hythe, in the Bailiwick and Hundred of Stowting, and the Lathe of Shipway, held of the Crown *in capite* by the service of six men and a constable to defend the passage of the sea at Sandgate. It had a checkered history before it fell into the hands of Thomas of Eythorne, having been sold and given from one to another—to the Archbishop, to Heringods, to the Burghershes, to Pavelys, Trivets, Cliffords, Wenlocks, Beauchamps, Nevilles, Kempes, and Clarkes: a piece of Kentish ground condemned to see new faces and to be no man's home. But from 1633 onward it became the anchor of the Jenkin family in Kent; and though passed on from brother to brother, held in shares between uncle and nephew, burdened by debts and jointures, and at least once sold and bought in again, it remains to this day in the hands of the direct line. It is not my design, nor have I the necessary knowledge, to give a history of this obscure family. But this is an age when genealogy has taken a new lease of life, and become for the first time a human science; so that we no longer study it in quest of the Guaith Voeths, but to trace out some of the secrets of descent and destiny; and as we study, we think less of Sir Bernard Burke and more of Mr. Galton. Not only do our character and talents lie upon the anvil and receive their temper during generations; but the very plot of our life's story unfolds itself on a scale of centuries, and the biography of the man is only an episode in the epic of the family. From this point of view I ask the reader's leave to begin this notice of a remarkable man who was my friend, with the accession of his great-grandfather, John Jenkin.

This John Jenkin, a grandson of Damaris Kingsley, of the family of "Westward Ho!" was born in 1727, and married Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Frewen, of Church House, Northiam. The Jenkins had now been long enough intermarrying with their Kentish neighbors to be Kentish folk themselves in all but name; and with the Frewens in particular their connection is singularly involved. John and his wife were each descended in the third degree from another Thomas Frewen, Vicar of Northiam, and brother to Accepted Frewen, Archbishop of York. John's mother had married a Frewen for a second husband. And the last complication was to be added by the Bishop of Chichester's brother, Charles Buckner, Vice-Admiral of the White, who was twice married, first to a paternal cousin of Squire John, and second to Anne, only sister of the Squire's wife, and already the widow of another Frewen. The reader must bear Mrs. Buckner in mind; it was by means of that lady that Fleeming Jenkin began life as a poor man. Meanwhile, the relationship of any Frewen to any Jenkin at the end of these evolutions presents a problem almost insoluble; and we need not wonder if Mrs. John, thus exercised in her immediate circle, was in her old age "a great genealogist of all Sussex families, and much consulted." The names Frewen and Jenkin may almost seem to have been interchangeable at will; and yet Fate proceeds with such particularity that it was perhaps on the point of name that the family was ruined.

The John Jenkin had a family of one daughter and five extravagant and unpractical sons. The eldest, Stephen, entered the Church and held the living of Salehurst, where he offered, we may hope, an extreme example of the clergy of the age. He was a handsome figure of a man; jovial and jocular; fond of his garden, which produced under his care the finest fruits of the neighborhood; and like all the family, very choice in horses. He drove tandem; like Jehu, furiously. His saddle horse, Captain (for the names of horses are piously preserved in the family chronicle which I follow), was trained to break into a gallop as soon as the vicar's foot was thrown across its back; nor would the rein be drawn in the nine miles between Northiam and the Vicarage door. Debt was the man's proper element; he used to skulk from arrest in the chancel of his church; and the speed of Captain may have come sometimes handy. At an early age this unconventional parson married his cook, and by her he had two daughters and one son. One of the daughters died unmarried; the other imitated her father, and married "imprudently." The son, still more gallantly continuing the tradition, entered the army, loaded himself with debt, was forced to sell out, took refuge in the Marines, and was lost on the Dogger Bank in the warship

Minotaur. If he did not marry below him, like his father, his sister, and a certain great-uncle William, it was perhaps because he never married at all.

The second brother, Thomas, who was employed in the General Post-Office, followed in all material points the example of Stephen, married "not very creditably," and spent all the money he could lay his hands on. He died without issue; as did the fourth brother, John, who was of weak intellect and feeble health, and the fifth brother, William, whose brief career as one of Mrs. Buckner's satellites will fall to be considered later on. So soon, then, as the *Minotaur* had struck upon the Dogger Bank, Stowting and the line of the Jenkin family fell on the shoulders of the third brother, Charles.

Facility and self-indulgence are the family marks; facility (to judge by these imprudent marriages) being at once their quality and their defect; but in the cases of Charles, a man of exceptional beauty and sweetness both of face and disposition, the family fault had quite grown to be a virtue, and we find him in consequence the drudge and milk-cow of his relatives. Born in 1766, Charles served at sea in his youth, and smelt both salt water and powder. The Jenkins had inclined hitherto, as far as I can make out, to the land service. Stephen's son had been a soldier; William (fourth of Stowting) had been an officer of the unhappy Braddock's in America, where, by the way, he owned and afterward sold an estate on the James River, called after the parental name. It was probably by the influence of Captain Buckner, already connected with the family by his first marriage, that Charles Jenkin turned his mind in the direction of the navy; and it was in Buckner's own ship, the *Prothée,* 64, that the lad made his only campaign. It was in the days of Rodney's war, when the *Prothée,* we read, captured two large privateers to windward of Barbadoes, and was "materially and distinguishedly engaged" in both the actions with De Grasse. While at sea Charles kept a journal, and made strange archaic pilot-book sketches, part plan, part elevation, some of which survive for the amusement of posterity. He did a good deal of survey-ing, so that here we may perhaps lay our finger on the beginning of Fleeming's education as an engineer. What is still more strange, among the relics of the handsome midshipman and his stay in the gun-room of the *Prothée,* I find a code of signals graphically represented, for all the world as it would have been done by his grandson.

On the declaration of peace, Charles, because he had suffered from scurvy, received his mother's orders to retire; and he was not the man to refuse a request, far less to disobey a command. Thereupon he turned farmer, a trade he was to practise on a large scale; and we find him married to a Miss Schirr, a woman of some fortune, the daughter of a London merchant. Stephen, the not very reverend, was still alive, galloping about the country or skulking in his chancel. It does not appear whether he let or sold the paternal manor to Charles; one or other, it must have been; and the sailor-farmer settled at Stowting, with his wife, his mother, his unmarried sister, and his sick brother John. Out of the six people of whom his nearest family consisted, three were in his own house, and two others (the horse-leeches, Stephen and Thomas) he appears to have continued to assist with more amiability than wisdom. He hunted, belonged to the Yeomanry, owned famous horses, Maggie and Lucy, the latter coveted by royalty itself. "Lord Rokeby, his neighbor, called him kinsman," writes my artless chronicler, "and altogether life was very cheery." At Stowting his three sons, John, Charles, and Thomas Frewen, and his younger daughter, Anna, were all born to him; and the reader should here be told that it was through the report of this second Charles (born 1801) that he has been looking on at these confused passages of family history.

In the year 1805 the ruin of the Jenkins was begun. It was the work of a fallacious lady already mentioned, Aunt Anne Frewen, a sister of Mrs. John. Twice married, first to her cousin Charles Frewen, clerk to the Court of Chancery, Brunswick Herald, and Usher of the Black Rod, and secondly to Admiral Buckner, she was denied issue in both beds, and being very rich—she died worth about 60,000*l.,* mostly in land—she was in perpetual quest of an heir. The mirage of this fortune hung before successive members of the Jenkin family until her death in 1825, when it dissolved and left the latest Alnaschar face to face with bankruptcy. The grandniece, Stephen's daughter, the one who had not "married imprudently," appears to have been the first; for she was taken abroad by the golden aunt, and died in her care at Ghent in 1792. Next she adopted William, the youngest of the five nephews; took him abroad with her—it seems as if that were in the formula; was shut up with him in Paris by the Revolution; brought him back to Windsor, and got him a place in the King's Body-Guard, where he attracted the notice of George III by his proficiency in German. In 1797, being on guard at St. James's Palace, William took a cold which carried him off; and Aunt Anne was once more left heirless. Lastly, in 1805, perhaps moved by the Admiral, who had a kindness for his old midshipman, perhaps pleased by the good looks and the good nature of the man himself, Mrs. Buckner turned her eyes upon Charles Jenkin. He was not only to be the heir, however, he was to be the chief hand in a somewhat wild scheme of family farming. Mrs. Jenkin, the mother, contributed 164 acres of land; Mrs. Buckner, 570, some at Northiam, some farther off; Charles let one-half of Stowting to a tenant, and threw the other and various scattered parcels into the common enterprise; so that the whole farm amounted to near upon a thousand acres, and was scattered over thirty miles of country. The ex-seaman of thirty-nine, on whose wisdom and ubiquity the scheme depended, was to live in the mean while without care or fear. He was to check himself in nothing; his two extravagances, valuable horses and worthless brothers, were to be indulged in comfort; and whether the year quite paid itself or not, whether successive years left accumulated savings or only a growing deficit, the fortune of the golden aunt should in the end repair all.

On this understanding Charles Jenkin transported his family to Church House, Northiam: Charles the second, then a child of three, among the number. Through the eyes of the boy we have glimpses of the life that followed:

of Admiral and Mrs. Buckner driving up from Windsor in a coach and six, two post-horses and their own four; of the house full of visitors, the great roasts at the fire, the tables in the servants' hall laid for thirty or forty for a month together; of the daily press of neighbors, many of whom, Frewens, Lords, Bishops, Batchellors, and Dynes, were also kinsfolk; and the parties "under the great spreading chestnuts of the old fore court," where the young people danced and made merry to the music of the village band. Or perhaps, in the depth of winter, the father would bid young Charles saddle his pony; they would ride the thirty miles from Northiam to Stowting, with the snow to the pony's saddle girths, and be received by the tenants like princes.

This life of delights, with the continual visible comings and goings of the golden aunt, was well qualified to relax the fiber of the lads. John, the heir, a yeoman and a fox-hunter, "loud and notorious with his whip and spurs," settled down into a kind of Tony Lumpkin, waiting for the shoes of his father and his aunt. Thomas Frewen, the youngest, is briefly dismissed as "a handsome beau"; but he had the merit or the good fortune to become a doctor of medicine, so that when the crash came he was not empty-handed for the war of life. Charles, at the day-school of Northiam, grew so well acquainted with the rod, that his floggings became matter of pleasantry and reached the ears of Admiral Buckner. Hereupon that tall, rough-voiced, formidable uncle entered with the lad into a covenant: every time that Charles was thrashed he was to pay the Admiral a penny; every day that he escaped, the process was to be reversed. "I recollect," writes Charles, "going crying to my mother to be taken to the Admiral to pay my debt." It would seem by these terms the speculation was a losing one; yet it is probable it paid indirectly by bringing the boy under remark. The Admiral was no enemy to dunces; he loved courage, and Charles, while yet little more than a baby, would ride the great horse into the pond. Presently it was decided that here was the stuff of a fine sailor; and at an early period the name of Charles Jenkin was entered on a ship's books.

From Northiam he was sent to another school at Boonshill, near Rye, where the master took "infinite delight" in strapping him. "It keeps me warm and makes you grow," he used to say. And the stripes were not altogether wasted, for the dunce, though still very "raw," made progress with his studies. It was known, moreover, that he was going to sea, always a ground of preeminence with schoolboys; and in his case the glory was not altogether future, it wore a present form when he came driving to Rye behind four horses in the same carriage with an Admiral. "I was not a little proud, you may believe," says he.

In 1814, when he was thirteen years of age, he was carried by his father to Chichester to the Bishop's Palace. The Bishop had heard from his brother the Admiral that Charles was likely to do well, and had an order from Lord Melville for the lad's admission to the Royal Naval College at Portsmouth. Both the Bishop and the Admiral patted him on the head and said, "Charles will restore the old family"; by which I gather with some surprise that, even in these days of open house at Northiam and golden hope of my aunt's fortune, the family was supposed to stand in need of restoration. But the past is apt to look brighter than nature, above all to those enamored of their genealogy; and the ravages of Stephen and Thomas must have always given matter of alarm.

What with the flattery of bishops and admirals, the fine company in which he found himself at Portsmouth, his visits to Mrs. Buckner (soon a widow) at Windsor, where he had a pony kept for him, and visited at Lord Melville's and Lord Harcourt's and the Leveson-Gowers, he began to have "bumptious notions," and his head was "somewhat turned with fine people"; as to some extent it remained throughout his innocent and honorable life.

In this frame of mind the boy was appointed to the *Conqueror,* Captain Davie, humorously known as Gentle Johnnie. The captain had earned this name by his style of discipline, which would have figured well in the pages of Marryat: "Put this prisoner's head in a bag and give him another dozen!" survives as a specimen of his commands; and the men were often punished twice or thrice a week. On board the ship of this disciplinarian, Charles and his father were carried in a billy-boat from Sheerness in December, 1816: Charles with an outfit suitable to his pretensions, a twenty-guinea sextant and 120 dollars in silver, which were ordered into the care of the gunner. "The old clerks and mates," he writes, "used to laugh and jeer me for joining the ship in a billy-boat, and when they found I was from Kent, vowed I was an old Kentish smuggler. This to my pride, you will believe, was not a little offensive."

The *Conqueror* carried the flag of Vice-Admiral Plampin, commanding at the Cape and St. Helena; and at that all-important islet, in July, 1817, she relieved the flagship of Sir Pulteney Malcolm. Thus it befell that Charles Jenkin, coming too late for the epic of the French wars, played a small part in the dreary and disgraceful after-piece of St. Helena. Life on the guard-ship was onerous and irksome. The anchor was never lifted, sail never made, the great guns were silent; none was allowed on shore except on duty; all day the movements of the imperial captive were signaled to and fro; all night the boats rowed guard around the accessible portions of the coast. This prolonged stagnation and petty watchfulness in what Napoleon himself called that "unchristian" climate, told cruelly on the health of the ship's company. In eighteen months, according to O'Meara, the *Conqueror* had lost one hundred and ten men and invalided home one hundred and seven, "being more than a third of her complement." It does not seem that our young midshipman so much as once set eyes on Bonaparte; and yet in other ways Jenkin was more fortunate than some of his comrades. He drew in water-color; not so badly as his father, yet ill enough; and this art was so rare aboard the *Conqueror* that even his humble proficiency marked him out and procured him some alleviations. Admiral Plampin had succeeded Napoleon at the Briars; and here he had young Jenkin staying with him to make sketches of the historic house. One of these is before me as I write, and gives a strange notion of the arts in our old English Navy.

Yet it was again as an artist that the lad was taken for a run to Rio, and apparently for a second outing in a ten-gun brig. These, and a cruise of six weeks to windward of the island undertaken by the *Conqueror* herself in quest of health, were the only breaks in three years of murderous inaction; and at the end of that period Jenkin was invalided home, having "lost his health entirely."

As he left the deck of the guard-ship the historic part of his career came to an end. For forty-two years he continued to serve his country obscurely on the seas, sometimes thanked for inconspicuous and honorable services, but denied any opportunity of serious distinction. He was first two years in the *Larne,* Captain Tait, hunting pirates and keeping a watch on the Turkish and Greek squadrons in the Archipelago. Captain Tait was a favorite with Sir Thomas Maitland, High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands—King Tom as he was called—who frequently took passage in the *Larne.* King Tom knew every inch of the Mediterranean, and was a terror to the officers of the watch. He would come on deck at night; and with his broad Scotch accent. "Well, sir," he would say, "what depth of water have ye? Well, now, sound; and ye'll just find so or so many fathoms," as the case might be; and the obnoxious passenger was generally right. On one occasion, as the ship was going into Corfu, Sir Thomas came up the hatchway and cast his eyes toward the gallows. "Bangham"—Charles Jenkin heard him say to his aide-de-camp, Lord Bangham—"where the devil is that other chap? I left four fellows hanging there; now I can only see three. Mind there is another there to-morrow." And sure enough there was another Greek dangling the next day. "Captain Hamilton, of the *Cambrian,* kept the Greeks in order afloat," writes my author, "and King Tom ashore."

From 1823 onward, the chief scene of Charles Jenkin's activities was in the West Indies, where he was engaged off and on till 1844, now as a subaltern, now in a vessel of his own, hunting out pirates, "then very notorious" in the Leeward Islands, cruising after slavers, or carrying dollars and provisions for the Government. While yet a midshipman, he accompanied Mr. Cockburn to Caracas and had a sight of Bolivar. In the brigantine *Griffon,* which he commanded in his last years in the West Indies, he carried aid to Guadeloupe after the earthquake, and twice earned the thanks of Government: once for an expedition to Nicaragua to extort, under threat of a blockade, proper apologies and a sum of money due to certain British merchants; and once during an insurrection in San Domingo, for the rescue of certain others from a perilous imprisonment and the recovery of a "chest of money" of which they had been robbed. Once, on the other hand, he earned his share of public censure. This was in 1837, when he commanded the *Romney* lying in the inner harbor of Havana. The *Romney* was in no proper sense a man-of-war; she was a slave-hulk, the bonded warehouse of the Mixed Slave Commission; where negroes, captured out of slavers under Spanish colors, were detained provisionally, till the Commission should decide upon their case and either set them free or bind them to apprenticeship. To this ship, already an eyesore to the authorities, a Cuban slave made his escape. The position was invidious; on one side were the tradition of the British flag and the state of public sentiment at home; on the other, the certainty that if the slave were kept, the *Romney* would be ordered at once out of the harbor, and the object of the Mixed Commission compromised. Without consultation with any other officer, Captain Jenkin (then lieutenant) returned the man to shore and took the Captain-General's receipt. Lord Palmerston approved his course; but the zealots of the anti-slave trade movement (never to be named without respect) were much dissatisfied; and thirty-nine years later, the matter was again canvassed in Parliament, and Lord Palmerston and Captain Jenkin defended by Admiral Erskine in a letter to the *Times* (March 13, 1876).

In 1845, while still lieutenant, Charles Jenkin acted as Admiral Pigot's flag captain in the Cove of Cork, where there were some thirty pennants; and about the same time, closed his career by an act of personal bravery. He had proceeded with his boats to the help of a merchant vessel, whose cargo of combustibles had taken fire and was smoldering under hatches; his sailors were in the hold, where the fumes were already heavy, and Jenkin was on deck directing operations, when he found his orders were no longer answered from below: he jumped down without hesitation and slung up several insensible men with his own hand. For this act, he received a letter from the Lords of the Admiralty expressing a sense of his gallantry; and pretty soon after was promoted Commander, superseded, and could never again obtain employment.

In 1828 or 1829, Charles Jenkin was in the same watch with another midshipman, Robert Colin Campbell Jackson, who introduced him to his family in Jamaica. The father, the Honorable Robert Jackson, Custos Rotulorum of Kingston, came of a Yorkshire family, said to be originally Scotch; and on the mother's side, counted kinship with some of the Forbeses. The mother was Susan Campbell, one of the Campbells of Auchenbreck. Her father Colin, a merchant in Greenock, is said to have been the heir to both the estate and the baronetcy; he claimed neither, which casts a doubt upon the fact; but he had pride enough himself, and taught enough pride to his family, for any station or descent in Christendom. He had four daughters. One married an Edinburgh writer, as I have it on a first account—a minister, according to another—a man at least of reasonable station, but not good enough for the Campbells of Auchenbreck; and the erring one was instantly discarded. Another married an actor of the name of Adcock, whom (as I receive the tale) she had seen acting in a barn; but the phrase should perhaps be regarded rather as a measure of the family annoyance, than a mirror of the facts. The marriage was not in itself unhappy; Adcock was a gentleman by birth and made a good husband; the family reasonably prospered, and one of the daughters married no less a man than Clarkson Stanfield. But by the father, and the two remaining Miss Campbells, people of fierce passions and a truly Highland pride, the derogation was bitterly resented. For long the sisters lived estranged; then Mrs. Jackson and Mrs. Adcock were reconciled for a moment, only to quarrel the more fiercely; the name of Mrs. Adcock was proscribed, nor did it again pass her sister's lips, until the morning when she announced: "Mary Adcock is dead; I saw her in her shroud last night." Second sight was hereditary in the house; and sure enough, as I have it reported, on that very night Mrs. Adcock had passed away. Thus, of the four daughters, two had, according to the idiotic notions of their friends, disgraced themselves in marriage; the others supported the honor of the family with a better grace, and married West Indian magnates of whom, I believe, the world has never heard and would not care to hear: So strange a thing is this hereditary pride. Of Mr. Jackson, beyond the fact that he was Fleeming's grandfather, I know naught. His wife, as I have said, was a woman of fierce passions; she would tie her house slaves to the bed and lash them with her own hand; and her conduct to her wild and down-going sons, was a mixture of almost insane self-sacrifice and wholly insane violence of temper. She had three sons and one daughter. Two of the sons went utterly to ruin, and reduced their mother to poverty. The third went to India, a slim, delicate lad, and passed so wholly from the knowledge of his relatives that he was thought to be long dead. Years later, when his sister was living in Genoa, a red-bearded man of great strength and stature, tanned by years in India, and his hands covered with barbaric gems, entered the room unannounced, as she was playing the piano, lifted her from her seat, and kissed her. It was her brother, suddenly returned out of a past that was never very clearly understood, with the rank of general, many strange gems, many cloudy stories of adventure, and next his heart, the daguerreotype of an Indian prince with whom he had mixed blood.

The last of this wild family, the daughter, Henrietta Camilla, became the wife of the midshipman Charles, and the mother of the subject of this notice, Fleeming Jenkin. She was a woman of parts and courage. Not beautiful, she had a far higher gift, the art of seeming so; played the part of a belle in society, while far lovelier women were left unattended; and up to old age, had much of both the exigency and the charm that mark that character. She drew naturally, for she had no training, with unusual skill; and it was from her, and not from the two naval artists, that Fleeming inherited his eye and hand. She played on the harp and sang with something beyond the talent of an amateur. At the age of seventeen, she heard Pasta in Paris; flew up in a fire of youthful enthusiasm; and the next morning, all alone and without introduction, found her way into the presence of the *prima donna* and begged for lessons. Pasta made her sing, kissed her when she had done, and though she refused to be her mistress, placed her in the hands of a friend. Nor was this all; for when Pasta returned to Paris she sent for the girl (once at least) to test her progress. But Mrs. Jenkin's talents were not so remarkable as her fortitude and strength of will; and it was in an art for which she had no natural taste (the art of literature) that she appeared before the public. Her novels, though they attained and merited a certain popularity both in France and England, are a measure only of her courage. They were a task, not a beloved task; they were written for money in days of poverty, and they served their end. In the least thing as well as in the greatest, in every province of life as well as in her novels, she displayed the same capacity of taking infinite pains, which descended to her son. When she was about forty (as near as her age was known) she lost her voice; set herself at once to learn the piano, working eight hours a day; and attained to such proficiency that her collaboration in chamber music was courted by professionals. And more than twenty years later, the old lady might have been seen dauntlessly beginning the study of Hebrew. This is the more ethereal part of courage; nor was she wanting in the more material. Once when a neighboring groom, a married man, had seduced her maid Mrs. Jenkin mounted her horse, rode over to the stable entrance and horsewhipped the man with her own hand.

How a match came about between this talented and spirited girl and the young midshipman, is not very easy to conceive. Charles Jenkin was one of the finest creatures breathing; loyalty, devotion, simple natural piety, boyish cheerfulness, tender and manly sentiment in the old sailor fashion, were in him inherent and inextinguishable either by age, suffering, or injustice. He looked, as he was, every inch a gentleman; he must have been everywhere notable, even among handsome men, both for his face and his gallant bearing; not so much that of a sailor, you would have said, as like one of those gentle and graceful soldiers that, to this day, are the most pleasant of Englishmen to see. But though he was in these ways noble, the dunce scholar of Northiam was to the end no genius. Upon all points that a man must understand to be a gentleman, to be upright, gallant, affectionate and dead to self, Captain Jenkin was more knowing than one among a thousand; outside of that, his mind was very largely blank. He had indeed a simplicity that came near to vacancy; and in the first forty years of his married life this want grew more accentuated. In both families imprudent marriages had been the rule; but neither Jenkin nor Campbell had ever entered into a more unequal union. It was the captain's good looks, we may suppose, that gained for him this elevation; and in some ways and for many years of his life, he had to pay the penalty. His wife, impatient of his incapacity and surrounded by brilliant friends, used him with a certain contempt. She was the managing partner; the life was hers, not his; after his retirement they lived much abroad, where the poor captain, who could never learn any language but his own, sat in the corner mumchance; and even his son, carried away by his bright mother, did not recognize for long the treasures of simple chivalry that lay buried in the heart of his father. Yet it would be an error to regard this marriage as unfortunate. It not only lasted long enough to justify itself in a beautiful and touching epilogue, but it gave to the world the scientific work and what (while time was) were of far greater value, the delightful qualities of Fleeming Jenkin. The Kentish-Welsh family, facile, extravagant, generous to a fault and far from brilliant, had given the father an extreme example of its humble virtues. On the other side, the wild, cruel, proud, and somewhat blackguard stock of the Scotch Campbell-Jacksons, had put forth, in the person of the mother, all its force and courage.

The marriage fell in evil days. In 1823, the bubble of the Golden Aunt's inheritance had burst. She died holding the hand of the nephew she had so wantonly deceived; at the last she drew him down and seemed to bless him, surely with some remorseful feeling; for when the will was opened, there was not found so much as the mention of his name. He was deeply in debt; in debt even to the estate of his deceiver, so that he had to sell a piece of land to clear himself. "My dear boy," he said to Charles, "there will be nothing left for you. I am a ruined man." And here follows for me the strangest part of this story. From the death of the treacherous aunt, Charles Jenkin, senior, had still some nine years to live; it was perhaps too late for him to turn to saving, and perhaps his affairs were past restoration. But his family at least had all this while to prepare; they were still young men, and knew what they had to look for at their father's death; and yet when that happened in September, 1831, the heir was still apathetically waiting. Poor John, the days of his whips and spurs, and Yeomanry dinners, were quite over; and with that incredible softness of the Jenkin nature, he settled down for the rest of a long life, into something not far removed above a peasant. The mill farm at Stowting had been saved out of the wreck; and here he built himself a house on the Mexican model, and made the two ends meet with rustic thrift, gathering dung with his own hands upon the road and not at all abashed at his employment. In dress, voice, and manner, he fell into mere country plainness; lived without the least care for appearances, the least regret for the past or discontentment with the present; and when he came to die, died with Stoic cheerfulness, announcing that he had had a comfortable time and was yet well pleased to go. One would think there was little active virtue to be inherited from such a race; and yet in this same voluntary peasant, the special gift of Fleeming Jenkin was already half developed. The old man to the end was perpetually inventing; his strange, ill-spelled, unpunctuated correspondence is full (when he does not drop into cookery receipts) of pumps, road engines, steam-diggers, steam-plows, and steam-threshing machines; and I have it on Fleeming's word that what he did was full of ingenuity—only, as if by some cross destiny, useless. These disappointments he not only took with imperturbable good humor, but rejoiced with a particular relish over his nephew's success in the same field. "I glory in the professor," he wrote to his brother; and to Fleeming himself, with a touch of simple drollery, "I was much pleased with your lecture, but why did you hit me so hard with Conisure's (connoisseur's, *quasi* amateur's) engineering? Oh, what presumption!—either of you or *myself!*" A quaint, pathetic figure, this of uncle John, with his dung cart and his inventions; and the romantic fancy of his Mexican house; and his craze about the Lost Tribes, which seemed to the worthy man the key of all perplexities; and his quiet conscience, looking back on a life not altogether vain, for he was a good son to his father while his father lived, and when evil days approached, he had proved himself a cheerful Stoic. It followed from John's inertia, that the duty of winding up the estate fell into the hands of Charles. He managed it with no more skill than might be expected of a sailor ashore, saved a bare livelihood for John and nothing for the rest. Eight months later, he married Miss Jackson; and with her money bought in some two-thirds of Stowting. In the beginning of the little family history which I have been following to so great an extent, the Captain mentions, with a delightful pride: "A Court Baron and Court Leet are regularly held by the Lady of the Manor, Mrs. Henrietta Camilla Jenkin"; and indeed the pleasure of so describing his wife was the most solid benefit of the investment; for the purchase was heavily encumbered and paid them nothing till some years before their death. In the mean while, the Jackson family also, what with wild sons, an indulgent mother and the impending emancipation of the slaves, was moving nearer and nearer to beggary; and thus of two doomed and declining houses, the subject of this memoir was born, heir to an estate and to no money, yet with inherited qualities that were to make him known and loved.

CHAPTER II

1833—1851

Birth and Childhood—Edinburgh—Frankfort-on-the-Main—Paris—The Revolution of 1848—The Insurrection—Flight to Italy—Sympathy with Italy—The Insurrection in Genoa—A Student in Genoa—The Lad and his Mother.

HENRY CHARLES FLEEMING JENKIN (Fleeming, pronounced Flemming to his friends and family) was born in a Government building on the coast of Kent, near Dungeness, where his father was serving at the time in the Coastguard, on March 25, 1833, and named after Admiral Fleeming, one of his father's protectors in the navy.

His childhood was vagrant like his life. Once he was left in the care of his grandmother Jackson, while Mrs. Jenkin sailed in her husband's ship and stayed a year at Havana. The tragic woman was besides from time to time a member of the family; she was in distress of mind and reduced in fortune by the misconduct of her sons; her destitution and solitude made it a recurring duty to receive her, her violence continually enforced fresh separations. In her passion of a disappointed mother, she was a fit object of pity; but her grandson, who heard her load his own mother with cruel insults and reproaches, conceived for her an indignant and impatient hatred, for which he blamed himself in later life. It is strange from this point of view to see his childish letters to Mrs. Jackson; and to think that a man, distinguished above all by stubborn truthfulness, should have been brought up to such dissimulation. But this is of course unavoidable in life; it did no harm to Jenkin; and whether he got harm or benefit from a so early acquaintance with violent and hateful scenes, is more than I can guess. The experience, at least, was formative; and in judging his character it should not be forgotten. But Mrs. Jackson was not the only stranger in their gates; the Captain's sister, Aunt

Anna Jenkin, lived with them until her death; she had all the Jenkin beauty of countenance, though she was unhappily deformed in body and of frail health; and she even excelled her gentle and ineffectual family in all amiable qualities. So that each of the two races from which Fleeming sprang, had an outpost by his very cradle; the one he instinctively loved, the other hated; and the lifelong war in his members had begun thus early by a victory for what was best.

We can trace the family from one country place to another in the south of Scotland; where the child learned his taste for sport by riding home the pony from the moors. Before he was nine he could write such a passage as this about a Hallowe'en observance: "I pulled a middling-sized cabbage-runt with a pretty sum of gold about it. No witches would run after me when I was sowing my hempseed this year; my nuts blazed away together very comfortable to the end of their lives, and when mama put hers in, which were meant for herself and papa, they blazed away in the like manner." Before he was ten he could write, with a really irritating precocity, that he had been "making some pictures from a book called 'Les Français peints par eux-mêmes.' . . . It is full of pictures of all classes, with a description of each in French. The pictures are a little caricatured, but not much." Doubtless this was only an echo from his mother, but it shows the atmosphere in which he breathed. It must have been a good change for this art critic to be the playmate of Mary McDonald, their gardener's daughter at Barjarg, and to sup with her family on potatoes and milk; and Fleeming himself attached some value to this early and friendly experience of another class.

His education, in the formal sense, began at Jedburgh. Thence he went to the Edinburgh Academy, where he was the classmate of Tait and Clerk Maxwell, bore away many prizes, and was once unjustly flogged by Rector Williams. He used to insist that all his bad schoolfellows had died early, a belief amusingly characteristic of the man's consistent optimism. In 1846 the mother and son proceeded to Frankfort-on-the-Main, where they were soon joined by the father, now reduced to inaction and to play something like third fiddle in his narrow household. The emancipation of the slaves had deprived them of their last resource beyond the half-pay of a captain; and life abroad was not only desirable for the sake of Fleeming's education, it was almost enforced by reasons of economy. But it was, no doubt, somewhat hard upon the captain. Certainly that perennial boy found a companion in his son; they were both active and eager, both willing to be amused, both young, if not in years, then in character. They went out together on excursions and sketched old castles, sitting side by side; they had an angry rivalry in walking, doubtless equally sincere upon both sides; and indeed we may say that Fleeming was exceptionally favored, and that no boy had ever a companion more innocent, engaging, gay, and airy. But, although in this case it would be easy to exaggerate its import, yet, in the Jenkin family also, the tragedy of the generations was proceeding, and the child was growing out of his father's knowledge. His artistic aptitude was of a different order. Already he had his quick sight of many sides of life; he already overflowed with distinctions and generalizations, contrasting the dramatic art and national character of England, Germany, Italy, and France. If he were dull, he would write stories and poems. "I have written," he says at thirteen, "a very long story in heroic measure, 300 lines, and another Scotch story and innumerable bits of poetry"; and at the same age he had not only a keen feeling for scenery, but could do something with his pen to call it up. I feel I do always less than justice to the delightful memory of Captain Jenkin; but with a lad of this character, cutting the teeth of his intelligence, he was sure to fall into the background.

The family removed in 1847 to Paris, where Fleeming was put to school under one Deluc. There he learned French, and (if the captain is right) first began to show a taste for mathematics. But a far more important teacher than Deluc was at hand; the year 1848, so momentous for Europe, was momentous also for Fleeming's character. The family politics were Liberal; Mrs. Jenkin, generous before all things, was sure to be upon the side of exiles; and in the house of a Paris friend of hers, Mrs. Turner—already known to fame as Shelley's Cornelia de Boinville—Fleeming saw and heard such men as Manin, Gioberti, and the Ruffinis. He was thus prepared to sympathize with revolution; and when the hour came, and he found himself in the midst of stirring and influential events, the lad's whole character was moved. He corresponded at that time with a young Edinburgh friend, one Frank Scott; and I am here going to draw somewhat largely on this boyish correspondence. It gives us at once a picture of the Revolution and a portrait of Jenkin at fifteen; not so different (his friends will think) from the Jenkin of the end—boyish, simple, opinionated, delighting in action, delighting before all things in any generous sentiment.

"February 23, 1848.

"When at 7 o'clock to-day I went out, I met a large band going round the streets, calling on the inhabitants to illuminate their houses, and bearing torches. This was all very good fun, and everybody was delighted; but as they stopped rather long and were rather turbulent in the Place de la Madeleine, near where we live" [in the Rue Caumartin] "a squadron of dragoons came up, formed, and charged at a hand-gallop. This was a very pretty sight; the crowd was not too thick, so they easily got away; and the dragoons only gave blows with the back of the sword, which hurt but did not wound. I was as close to them as I am now to the other side of the table; it was rather impressive, however. At the second charge they rode on the pavement and knocked the torches out of the fellows' hands; rather a shame, too—wouldn't be stood in England. . . .

[At] "ten minutes to ten . . . I went a long way along the Boulevards, passing by the office of Foreign Affairs, where Guizot lives, and where to-night there were about a thousand troops protecting him from the fury of the populace. After this was passed, the number of the people thickened, till about half a mile further on, I met a troop of vagabonds, the wildest vagabonds in the world—Paris vagabonds, well armed, having probably broken into gunsmith's shops and taken the guns and swords. They were about a hundred. These were followed by about a thousand (I am rather diminishing than exaggerating numbers all through), indifferently armed with rusty sabers, sticks, etc. An unaccountable troop of gentlemen, workmen, shopkeepers' wives, (Paris women dare anything), ladies' maids, common women—in fact, a crowd of all classes, though by far the greater number were of the better dressed class—followed. Indeed, it was a splendid sight: the mob in front chanting the '*Marseillaise,*' the national war hymn, grave and powerful, sweetened by the night air—though night in these splendid streets was turned into day, every window was filled with lamps, dim torches were tossing in the crowd . . . for Guizot has late this night given in his resignation, and this was an improvised illumination.

"I and my father had turned with the crowd, and were close behind the second troop of vagabonds. Joy was on every face. I remarked to papa that 'I would not have missed the scene for anything, I might never see such a splendid one,' when *plong* went one shot—every face went pale—*r-r-r-r-r* went the whole detachment, [and] the crowd of gentlemen and ladies turned and cut. Such a scene!—ladies, gentlemen, and vagabonds went sprawling in the mud, not shot but tripped up; and those that went down could not rise, they were trampled over. . . . I ran a short time straight on and did not fall, then turned down a side street, ran fifty yards and felt tolerably safe; looked for papa, did not see him; so walked on quickly, giving the news as I went." [It appears, from another letter, the boy was the first to carry word of the firing to the Rue St. Honoré; and that his news, wherever he brought it, was received with hurrahs. It was an odd entrance upon life for a little English lad, thus to play the part of rumor in such a crisis of the history of France.]

"But now a new fear came over me. I had little doubt but my papa was safe, but my fear was that he should arrive at home before me and tell the story; in that case

I knew my mama would go half mad with fright, so on I went as quick as possible. I heard no more discharges. When I got half way home I found my way blocked up by troops. That way or the Boulevards I must pass. In the Boulevards they were fighting, and I was afraid all other passages might be blocked up . . . and I should have to sleep in a hotel in that case, and then my mama—however, after a long *détour,* I found a passage and ran home, and in our street joined papa.

". . . I'll tell you to-morrow the other facts gathered from newspapers and papa. . . . To-night I have given you what I have seen with my own eyes an hour ago, and began trembling with excitement and fear. If I have been too long on this one subject, it is because it is yet before my eyes.

"Monday, 24.

"It was that fire raised the people. There was fighting all through the night in the Rue Notre Dame de Lorette, on the Boulevards where they had been shot at, and at the Porte St. Denis. At ten o'clock, they resigned the house of the Minister of Foreign Affairs (where the disastrous volley was fired) to the people, who immediately took possession of it. I went to school but [was] hardly there when the row in that quarter commenced. Barricades began to be fixed. Every one was very grave now; the *externes* went away, but no one came to fetch me, so I had to stay. No lessons could go on. A troop of armed men took possession of the barricades, so it was supposed I should have to sleep there. The revolters came and asked for arms, but Dulec (head-master) is a National Guard, and he said he had only his own and he wanted them; but he said he would not fire on them. Then they asked for wine, which he gave them. They took good care not to get drunk, knowing they would not be able to fight. They were very polite and behaved extremely well.

"About 12 o'clock a servant came for a boy who lived near me, [and] Dulec thought it best to send me with him. We heard a good deal of firing near, but did not come across any of the parties. As we approached the railway, the barricades were no longer formed of palings, planks, or stones; but they had got all the omnibuses as they passed, sent the horses and passengers about their business, and turned them over. A double row of overturned coaches made a capital barricade, with a few paving stones.

"When I got home I found to my astonishment that in our fighting quarter it was much quieter. Mama had just been out seeing the troops in the Place de la Concorde, when suddenly the Municipal Guard, now fairly exasperated, prevented the National Guard from proceeding, and fired at them; the National Guard had come with their muskets not loaded, but at length returned the fire. Mama saw the National Guard fire. The Municipal Guard was round the corner. She was delighted for she saw no person killed, though many of the Municipals were . . .

"I immediately went out with my papa (mama had just come back with him) and went to the Place de la Concorde. There was an enormous quantity of troops in the Place. Suddenly the gates of the gardens of the Tuileries opened: we rushed forward, out galloped an enormous number of cuirassiers, in the middle of which were a couple of low carriages, said first to contain the Count de Paris and the Duchess of Orleans, but afterward they said it was the King and Queen; and then I heard he had abdicated. I returned and gave the news.

"Went out again up the Boulevards. The house of the Minister of Foreign Affairs was filled with people and '*Hôtel du Peuple*' written on it; the Boulevards were barricaded with fine old trees that were cut down and stretched all across the road. We went through a great many little streets, all strongly barricaded, and sentinels of the people at the principal of them. The streets were very unquiet, filled with armed men and women, for the troops had followed the ex-King to Neuilly and left Paris in the power of the people. We met the captain of the Third Legion of the National Guard (who had principally protected the people), badly wounded by a Municipal

Guard, stretched on a litter. He was in possession of his senses. He was surrounded by a troop of men crying 'Our brave captain—we have him yet—he's not dead! *Vive la Réforme!*' This cry was responded to by all, and every one saluted him as he passed. I do not know if he was mortally wounded. That Third Legion has behaved splendidly.

"I then returned, and shortly afterward went out again to the garden of the Tuileries. They were given up to the people and the palace was being sacked. The people were firing blank cartridges to testify their joy, and they had a cannon on the top of the palace. It was a sight to see a palace sacked and armed vagabonds firing out of the windows, and throwing shirts, papers, and dresses of all kinds out of the windows. They are not rogues, these French; they are not stealing, burning, or doing much harm. In the Tuileries they have dressed up some of the statues, broken some, and stolen nothing but queer dresses. I say, Frank, you must not hate the French; hate the Germans if you like. The French laugh at us a little, and call out *Goddam* in the streets; but to-day, in civil war, when they might have put a bullet through our heads, I never was insulted once.

"At present we have a provisional Government, consisting of Odion [*sic*] Barrot, Lamartine, Marast, and some others; among them a common workman, but very intelligent. This is a triumph of liberty—rather!

"Now then, Frank, what do you think of it? I in a revolution and out all day. Just think, what fun! So it was at first, till I was fired at yesterday; but to-day I was not frightened, but it turned me sick at heart, I don't know why.

"There has been no great bloodshed [though] I certainly have seen men's blood several times. But there's something shocking to see a whole armed populace, though not furious, for not one single shop has been broken open, except the gunsmiths' shops, and most of the arms will probably be taken back again. For the French have no cupidity in their nature; they don't like to steal—it is not in their nature. I shall send this letter in a day or two, when I am sure the post will go again. I know I have been a long time writing, but I hope you will find the matter of this letter interesting, as coming from a person resident on the spot; though probably you don't take much interest in the French, but I can think, write, and speak on no other subject.

"Feb. 25.

"There is no more fighting, the people have conquered; but the barricades are still kept up, and the people are in arms, more than ever fearing some new act of treachery on the part of the ex-King. The fight where I was was the principal cause of the Revolution. I was in little danger from the shot, for there was an immense crowd in front of me, though quite within gunshot. [By another letter, a hundred yards from the troops.] I wished I had stopped there.

"The Paris streets are filled with the most extraordinary crowds of men, women and children, ladies and gentlemen. Every person joyful. The bands of armed men are perfectly polite. Mama and aunt to-day walked through armed crowds alone, that were firing blank cartridges in all directions. Every person made way with the greatest politeness, and one common man with a blouse, coming by accident against her, immediately stopped to beg her pardon in the politest manner. There are few drunken men. The Tuileries is still being run over by the people; they only broke two things, a bust of Louis Philippe and one of Marshal Bugeaud, who fired on the people. . . .

"I have been out all day again to-day, and precious tired I am. The Republican party seem the strongest, and are going about with red ribbons in their buttonholes. . . .

"The title of 'Mister' is abandoned; they say nothing but 'Citizen,' and the people are shaking hands amazingly. They have got to the top of the public monuments, and, mingling with bronze or stone statues, five or six make a sort of *tableau vivant,* the top man holding up the red flag of the Republic; and right well they do it, and very picturesque they look. I think I shall put this letter in the post to-morrow as we got a letter to-night.

(On Envelope.)

"M. Lamartine has now by his eloquence conquered the whole armed crowd of citizens threatening to kill him if he did not immediately proclaim the Republic and red flag. He said he could not yield to the citizens of Paris alone, that the whole country must be consulted, that he chose the tricolor, for it had followed and accompanied the triumphs of France all over the world, and that the red flag had only been dipped in the blood of the citizens. For sixty hours he has been quieting the people; he is at the head of everything. Don't be prejudiced, Frank, by what you see in the papers. The French have acted nobly, splendidly; there has been no brutality, plundering, or stealing. . . . I did not like the French before; but in this respect they are the finest people in the world. I am so glad to have been here."

And there one could wish to stop with this apotheosis of liberty and order read with the generous enthusiasm of a boy; but as the reader knows, it was but the first act of the piece. The letters, vivid as they are, written as they were by a hand trembling with fear and excitement, yet do injustice, in their boyishness of tone, to the profound effect produced. At the sound of these songs and shot of cannon, the boy's mind awoke. He dated his own appreciation of the art of acting from the day when he saw and heard Rachel recite the *"Marseillaise"* at the Français, the tricolor in her arms. What is still more strange, he had been up to then invincibly indifferent to music, insomuch that he could not distinguish "God Save the Queen" from "Bonnie Dundee"; and now, to the chanting of the mob, he amazed his family by learning and singing "*Mourir pour la Patrie.*" But the letters, though they prepare the mind for no such revolution in the boy's tastes and feelings, are yet full of entertaining traits. Let the reader note Fleeming's eagerness to influence his friend Frank, an incipient Tory (no less) as further history displayed; his unconscious indifference to his father and devotion to his mother, betrayed in so many significant expressions and omissions; the sense of dignity of this diminutive "person resident on the spot," who was so happy as to escape insult; and the strange picture of the household—father, mother, son, and even poor Aunt Anna—all day in the streets in the thick of this rough business, and the boy packed off alone to school in a distant quarter on the very morrow of the massacre.

They had all the gift of enjoying life's textures as it comes; they were all born optimists. The name of liberty was honored in that family, its spirit also, but within stringent limits; and some of the foreign friends of Mrs. Jenkin were, as I have said, men distinguished on the Liberal side. Like Wordsworth, they beheld

France standing on the top of golden hours
And human nature seeming born again.

At once, by temper and belief, they were formed to find their element in such a decent and Whiggish convulsion, spectacular in its course, moderate in its purpose. For them,

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven.

And I can not but smile when I think that (again like Wordsworth) they should have so specially disliked the consequence.

It came upon them by surprise. Liberal friends of the precise right shade of color had assured them, in Mrs. Turner's drawing-room, that all was for the best; and they rose on January 23 without fear. About the middle of the day they heard the sound of musketry, and the next morning they were awakened by the cannonade. The French, who had behaved so "splendidly," pausing, at the voice of Lamartine, just where judicious Liberals could have desired—the French, who had "no cupidity in their nature," were now about to play a variation on the theme rebellion. The Jenkins took refuge in the house of Mrs. Turner, the house of the false prophets, "Anna going with Mrs. Turner, that she might be prevented speaking

English, Fleeming, Miss H. and I (it is the mother who writes) walking together. As we reached the Rue de Clichy, the report of the cannon sounded close to our ears and made our hearts sick, I assure you. The fighting was at the barrier Rochechouart, a few streets off. All Saturday and Sunday we were a prey to great alarm, there came many reports that the insurgents were getting the upper hand. One could tell the state of affairs from the extreme quiet or the sudden hum in the street. When the news was bad, all the houses closed and the people disappeared; when better, the doors half opened and you heard the sound of men again. From the upper windows we could see each discharge from the Bastille—I mean the smoke rising—and also the flames and smoke from the Boulevard la Chapelle. We were four ladies, and only Fleeming by way of a man, and difficulty enough we had to keep him from joining the National Guards—his pride and spirit were both fired. You can not picture to yourself the multitude of soldiers, guards, and armed men of all sorts we watched—not close to the window, however, for such havoc had been made among them by the firing from the windows, that as the battalions marched by, they cried, 'Fermez vos fenêtres!' and it was very painful to watch their looks of anxiety and suspicion as they marched by."

"The Revolution," writes Fleeming to Frank Scott, "was quite delightful: getting popped at and run at by horses, and giving sous for the wounded into little boxes guarded by the raggedest, picturesquest, delightfullest sentinels; but the insurrection! ugh, I shudder to think at [*sic*] it." He found it "not a bit of fun sitting boxed up in the house four days almost. . . . I was the only *gentleman* to four ladies, and didn't they keep me in order! I did not dare to show my face at a window, for fear of catching a stray ball or being forced to enter the National Guard; [for] they would have it I was a man full-grown, French and every way fit to fight. And my mama was as bad as any of them; she that told me I was a coward last time if I stayed in the house a quarter of an hour! But I drew, examined the pistols, of which I found lots with caps, powder, and ball, while sometimes murderous intentions of killing a dozen insurgents and dying violently overpowered by numbers. . . ." We may drop this sentence here: under the conduct of its boyish writer, is was to reach no legitimate end.

Four days of such discipline had cured the family of Paris; the same year Fleeming was to write, in answer apparently to a question of Frank Scott's, "I could find no national game in France but revolutions"; and the witticism was justified in their experience. On the first possible day, they applied for passports, and were advised to take the road to Geneva. It appears it was scarce safe to leave Paris for England. Charles Reade, with keen dramatic gusto, had just smuggled himself out of that city in the bottom of a cab. English gold had been found on the insurgents, the name of England was in evil odor; and it was thus—for strategic reasons, so to speak—that Fleeming found himself on the way to that Italy where he was to complete his education, and for which he cherished to the end a special kindness.

It was in Genoa they settled; partly for the sake of the captain, who might there find naval comrades; partly because of the Ruffinis, who had been friends of Mrs. Jenkin in their time of exile and were now considerable men at home; partly, in fine, with hopes that Fleeming might attend the University; in preparation for which he was put at once to school. It was the year of Novara; Mazzini was in Rome; the dry bones of Italy were moving; and for people of alert and liberal sympathies the time was inspiriting. What with exiles turned Ministers of State, universities thrown open to Protestants, Fleeming himself the first Protestant student in Genoa, and thus, as his mother writes, "a living instance of the progress of liberal ideas"—it was little wonder if the enthusiastic young woman and the clever boy were heart and soul upon the side of Italy. It should not be forgotten that they were both on their first visit to that country; the mother still "child enough" to be delighted when she saw "real monks" and both mother and son thrilling with the first sight of snowy Alps, the blue Mediterranean, and the crowded port and the palaces of Genoa. Nor was their zeal without knowledge. Ruffini, deputy for Genoa and soon to be the head of the University, was at their side; and by means of him the family appear to have had access to much Italian society. To the end, Fleeming professed his admiration of the Piedmontese and his unalterable confidence in the future of Italy under their conduct; for Victor Emanuel, Cavour, the first La Marmora and Garibaldi, he had varying degrees of sympathy and praise: perhaps highest for the King, whose good sense and temper filled him with respect—perhaps least for Garibaldi, whom he loved but yet mistrusted.

But this is to look forward: these were the days not of Victor Emanuel but of Charles Albert; and it was on Charles Albert that mother and son had now fixed their eyes as on the sword-bearer of Italy. On Fleeming's sixteenth birthday, they were, the mother writes, "in great anxiety for news from the army. You can have no idea what it is to live in a country where such a struggle is going on. The interest is one that absorbs all others. We eat, drink, and sleep to the noise of drums and musketry. You would enjoy and almost admire Fleeming's enthusiasm and earnestness—and courage, I may say—for we are among the small minority of English who side with the Italians. The other day, at dinner at the Consul's, boy as he is, and in spite of my admonitions, Fleeming defended the Italian cause, and so well that he 'tripped up the heels of his adversary' simply from being well-informed on the subject and honest. He is as true as steel, and for no one will he bend right or left. . . . Do not fancy him a Boabdil," she adds, "he is only a very true, candid boy. I am so glad he remains in all respects but information a great child."

If this letter is correctly dated, the cause was already lost and the King had already abdicated when these lines were written. No sooner did the news reach Genoa, than there began "tumultuous movements"; and the Jenkins received hints it would be wise to leave the city. But they had friends and interests; even the captain had English officers to keep him company, for Lord Hardwicke's ship, the *Vengeance,* lay in port; and supposing the danger to be real, I can not but suspect the whole family of a divided purpose, prudence being possibly weaker than curiosity. Stay, at least, they did, and thus rounded their experience of the revolutionary year. On Sunday, April 1, Fleeming and the captain went for a ramble beyond the walls, leaving Aunt Anna and Mrs. Jenkin to walk on the bastions with some friends. On the way back, this party turned aside to rest in the Church of the Madonna delle Grazie. "We had remarked," writes Mrs. Jenkin, "the entire absence of sentinels on the ramparts, and how the cannons were left in solitary state; and I had just remarked 'How quiet everything is!' when suddenly we heard the drums begin to beat and distant shouts. *Accustomed as we are* to revolutions, we never thought of being frightened. For all that, they resumed their return home. On the way they saw men running and vociferating, but nothing to indicate a general disturbance, until, near the Duke's palace they came upon and passed a shouting mob dragging along with it three cannon. It had scarcely passed before they heard a 'rushing sound'; one of the gentlemen thrust back the party of ladies under a shed, and the mob passed again. A fine-looking young man was in their hands; and Mrs. Jenkin saw him with his mouth open as if he sought to speak, saw him tossed from one to another like a ball, and then saw him no more. "He was dead a few instants after, but the crowd hid that terror from us. My knees shook under me and my sight left me." With this street tragedy, the curtain rose upon their second revolution.

The attack on Spirito Santo, and the capitulation and departure of the troops speedily followed. Genoa was in the hands of the Republicans, and now came a time when the English residents were in a position to pay some return for hospitality received. Nor were they backward. Our Consul (the same who had the benefit of correction from Fleeming) carried the Intendente on board the *Vengeance,* escorting him through the streets, getting along with him on board a shore boat, and when the insurgents leveled their muskets, standing up and naming himself, "*Console*

Inglese." A friend of the Jenkins', Captain Glynne, had a more painful, if a less dramatic part. One Colonel Nosozzo had been killed (I read) while trying to prevent his own artillery from firing on the mob; but in that hell's caldron of a distracted city, there were no distinctions made, and the Colonel's widow was hunted for her life. In her grief and peril, the Glynnes received and hid her; Captain Glynne sought and found her husband's body among the slain, saved it for two days, brought the widow a lock of the dead man's hair, but at last, the mob still strictly searching, seems to have abandoned the body, and conveyed his guest on board the *Vengeance*. The Jenkins also had their refugees, the family of an *employé* threatened by a decree. "You should have seen me making a Union Jack to nail over our door," writes Mrs. Jenkin. "I never worked so fast in my life. Monday and Tuesday," she continues, "were tolerably quiet, our hearts beating fast in the hope of La Marmora's approach, the streets barricaded, and none but foreigners and women allowed to leave the city." On Wednesday, La Marmora came indeed, but in the ugly form of a bombardment; and that evening the Jenkins sat without lights about their drawing-room window, "watching the huge red flashes of the cannon" from the Brigato and La Specula forts, and hearkening, not without some awful pleasure, to the thunder of the cannonade.

Lord Hardwicke intervened between the rebls and La Marmora; and there followed a troubled armistice, filled with the voice of panic. Now the *Vengeance* was known to be cleared for action; now it was rumored that the galley slaves were to be let loose upon the town, and now that the troops would enter it by storm. Crowds trusting in the Union Jack over the Jenkins' door, came to beg them to receive their linen and other valuables; nor could their instances be refused; and in the midst of all this bustle and alarm, piles of goods must be examined and long inventories made. At last the captain decided things had gone too far. He himself apparently remained to watch over the linen; but at five o'clock on the Sunday morning, Aunt Anna, Fleeming, and his mother were rowed in a pour of rain on board an English merchantman, to suffer "nine mortal hours of agonizing suspense." With the end of that time, peace was restored. On Tuesday morning officers with white flags appeared on the bastions; then, regiment by regiment, the troops marched in, two hundred men sleeping on the ground floor of the Jenkins' house, thirty thousand in all entering the city, but without disturbance, old La Marmora being a commander of a Roman sternness.

With the return of quiet, and the reopening of the universities, we behold a new character, Signor Flaminio; the professors, it appears, made no attempt upon the Jenkin; and thus readily Italianized the Fleeming. He came well recommended; for their friend Ruffini was then, or soon after, raised to be the head of the University; and the professors were very kind and attentive, possibly to Ruffini's *protégé,* perhaps also to the first Protestant student. It was no joke for Signor Flaminio at first; certificates had to be got from Paris and from Rector Williams; the classics must be furbished up at home that he might follow Latin lectures; examinations bristled in the path, the entrance examination with Latin and English essay, and oral trials (much softened for the foreigner) in Horace, Tacitus, and Cicero, and the first University examination only three months later, in Italian eloquence, no less, and other wider subjects. On one point the first Protestant student was moved to thank his stars: that there was no Greek required for the degree. Little did he think, as he set down his gratitude, how much, in later life and among cribs and dictionaries, he was to lament this circumstance; nor how much of that later life he was to spend acquiring, with infinite toil, a shadow of what he might then have got with ease and fully. But if his Genoese education was in this particular imperfect, he was fortunate in the branches that more immediately touched on his career. The physical laboratory was the best mounted in Italy. Bancalari, the professor of natural philosophy, was famous in his day; by what seems even an odd coincidence, he went deeply into electro-magnetism; and it was principally in that subject that Signor Flaminio, questioned in Latin and answering in Italian, passed his Master of Arts degree with first-class honors. That he had secured the notice of his teachers, one circumstance sufficiently proves. A philosophical society was started under the presidency of Mamiani, "one of the examiners and one of the leaders of the Moderate party"; and out of five promising students brought forward by the professors to attend the sittings and present essays, Signor Flaminio was one. I can not find that he ever read an essay; and indeed I think his hands were otherwise too full. He found his fellow-students "not such a bad set of chaps," and preferred the Piedmontese before the Genoese; but I suspect he mixed not very freely with either. Not only were his days filled with university work, but his spare hours were filled fully dedicated to the arts under the eye of a beloved task-mistress. He worked hard and well in the art school, where he obtained a silver medal "for a couple of legs the size of life drawn from one of Raphael's cartoons." His holidays were spent in sketching; his evenings, when they were free, at the theater. Here at the opera he discovered besides a taste for a new art, the art of music; and it was, he wrote, "as if he had found out a heaven on earth." "I am so anxious that whatever he professes to know, he should really perfectly possess," his mother wrote, "that I spare no pains"; neither to him nor to myself, she might have added. And so when he begged to be allowed to learn the piano, she started him with characteristic barbarity on the scales; and heard in consequence "heart-rending groans" and saw "anguished claspings of hands" as he lost his way among their arid intricacies.

In this picture of the lad at the piano, there is something, for the period, girlish. He was indeed his mother's boy; and it was fortunate his mother was not altogether feminine. She gave her son a womanly delicacy of morals, to a man's taste—to his own taste in later life—too finely spun, and perhaps more elegant than healthful. She encouraged him besides in drawing-room interests. But in other points her influence was manlike. Filled with the spirit of thoroughness, she taught him to make of the least of these accomplishments a virile task; and the teaching lasted him through life. Immersed as she was in the day's movements and buzzed about by leading Liberals, she handed on to him her creed in politics: and enduring kindness for Italy, and a loyalty, like that of many clever women, to the Liberal party with but small regard to men or measures. This attitude of mind used often to disappoint me in a man so fond of logic; but I see now how it was learned from the bright eyes of his mother and to the sound of the cannonades of 1848. To some of her defects, besides, she made him heir. Kind as was the bond that united her to her son, kind and even pretty, she was scarce a woman to adorn a home; loving as she did to shine; careless as she was of domestic, studious of public graces. She probably rejoiced to see the boy grow up in somewhat of the image of herself, generous, excessive, enthusiastic, external; catching at ideas, brandishing them when caught; fiery for the right, but always fiery; ready at fifteen to correct a consul, ready at fifty to explain to any artist his own art.

The defects and advantages of such a training were obvious in Fleeming throughout life. His thoroughness was not that of the patient scholar, but of an untrained woman with fits of passionate study; he had learned too much from dogma, given indeed by cherished lips; and precocious as he was in the use of the tools of the mind, he was truly backward in knowledge of life and of himself. Such as it was at least, his home and school training was now complete; and you are to conceive the lad as being formed in a household of meager revenue, among foreign surroundings, and under the influence of an imperious drawing-room queen; from whom he learned a great refinement of morals, a strong sense of duty, much forwardness of bearing, all manner of studious and artistic interests, and many ready-made opinions which he embraced with a son's and a disciple's loyalty.

CHAPTER III

1851—1858

Return to England—Fleeming at Fairbairn's—Experience in a Strike—Dr. Bell and Greek Architecture—The Gaskells—Fleeming at Greenwich—The Austins—Fleeming and the Austins—His Engagement—Fleeming and Sir W. Thomson.

IN 1851, the year of Aunt Anna's death, the family left Genoa and came to Manchester, where Fleeming was entered in Fairbairn's works as an apprentice. From the palaces and Alps, the Mole, the blue Mediterranean, the humming lanes and the bright theaters of Genoa, he fell—and he was sharply conscious of the fall—to the dim skies and the foul ways of Manchester. England he found on his return "a horrid place," and there is no doubt the family found it a dear one. The story of the Jenkin finances is not easy to follow. The family, I am told, did not practise frugality, only lamented that it should be needful; and Mrs. Jenkin, who was always complaining of "those dreadful bills," was "always a good deal dressed." But at this time of the return to England, things must have gone further. A holiday tour of a fortnight, Fleeming feared would be beyond what he could afford, and he only projected it "to have a castle in the air." And there were actual pinches. Fresh from a warmer sun, he was obliged to go without a greatcoat, and learned on railway journeys to supply the place of one with wrappings of old newspapers.

From half-past eight till six, he must "file and chip vigorously in a moleskin suit and infernally dirty." The work was not new to him, for he had already passed some time in a Genoese shop; and to Fleeming no work was without interest. Whatever a man can do or know, he longed to know and do also. "I never learned anything," he wrote, "not even standing on my head, but I found a use for it." In the spare hours of his first telegraph voyage, to give an instance of his greed of knowledge, he meant "to learn the whole art of navigation, every rope in the ship and how to handle her on any occasion"; and once when he was shown a young lady's holiday collection of seaweed, he must cry out, "It showed me my eyes had been idle." Nor was his the case of the mere literary smatterer, content if he but learn the names of things. In him, to do and to do well, was even a dearer ambition than to know. Anything done well, any craft, despatch, or finish, delighted and inspired him. I remember him with a twopenny Japanese box of three drawers, so exactly fitted that, when one was driven home, the others started from their places; the whole spirit of Japan, he told me, was pictured in that box; that plain piece of carpentry was as much inspired by the spirit of perfection as the happiest drawing or the finest bronze; and he who could not enjoy it in the one was not fully able to enjoy it in the others. Thus, too, he found in Leonardo's engineering and anatomical drawings a perpetual feast; and of the former he spoke even with emotion. Nothing indeed annoyed Fleeming more than the attempt to separate the fine arts from the arts of handicraft; any definition or theory that failed to bring these two together, according to him, had missed the point; and the essence of the pleasure received lay in seeing things well done. Other qualities must be added; he was the last to deny that; but this, of perfect craft, was at the bottom of all. And on the other hand, a nail ill-driven, a joint ill-fitted, a tracing clumsily done, anything to which a man had set his hand and not set it aptly, moved him to shame and anger. With such a character, he would feel but little drudgery at Fairbairn's. There would be something daily to be done, slovenliness to be avoided, and a higher mark of skill to be attained; he would chip and file, as he had practised scales, impatient of his own imperfection, but resolute to learn.

And there was another spring of delight. For he was now moving daily among those strange creations of man's brain, to some so abhorrent, to him of an interest so inexhaustible; in which iron, water, and fire are made to serve as slaves, now with a tread more powerful than an elephant's, and now with a touch more precise and dainty than a pianist's. The taste for machinery was one that I could never share with him, and he had a certain bitter pity for my weakness. Once when I had proved, for the hundredth time, the depth of this defect, he looked at me askance: "And the best of the joke," said he, "is that he thinks himself quite a poet." For to him the struggle of the engineer against brute forces and with inert allies, was nobly poetic. Habit never dulled in him the sense of the greatness of the aims and obstacles of his profession. Habit only sharpened his inventor's gusto in contrivance, in triumphant artifice, in the Odyssean subtleties, by which wires are taught to speak, and iron hands to weave, and the slender ship to brave and to outstrip the tempest. To the ignorant the great results alone are admirable; to the knowing, and to Fleeming in particular, rather the infinite device and sleight of hand that made them possible.

A notion was current at the time that, in such a shop as Fairbairn's, a pupil would never be popular unless he drank with the workmen and imitated them in speech and manner. Fleeming, who would do none of these things, they accepted as a friend and companion; and this was the subject of remark in Manchester, where some memory of it lingers till to-day. He thought it one of the advantages of his profession to be brought into a close relation with the working classes; and for the skilled artisan he had a great esteem, liking his company, his virtues, and his taste in some of the arts. But he knew the classes too well to regard them, like a platform speaker, in a lump. He drew, on the other hand, broad distinctions; and it was his profound sense of the difference between one working man and another that led him to devote so much time, in later days, to the furtherance of technical education. In 1852 he had occasion to see both men and masters at their worst, in the excitement of a strike; and very foolishly (after their custom) both would seem to have behaved. Beginning with a fair show of justice on either side, the masters stultified their cause by obstinate impolicy, and the men disgraced their order by acts of outrage. "On Wednesday last," writes Fleeming, "about three thousand banded round Fairbairn's door at 6 o'clock: men, women, and children, factory boys and girls, the lowest of the low in a very low place. Orders came that no one was to leave the works; but the men inside (Knobsticks, as they are called) were precious hungry and thought they would venture. Two of my companions and myself went out with the very first, and had the full benefit of every possible groan and bad language." But the police cleared a lane through the crowd, the pupils were suffered to escape unhurt, and only the Knobsticks followed home and kicked with clogs; so that Fleeming enjoyed, as we may say, for nothing, that fine thrill of expectant valor with which he had sallied forth into the mob. "I never before felt myself so decidedly somebody, instead of nobody," he wrote.

Outside as inside the works, he was "pretty merry and well to do," zealous in study, welcome to many friends, unwearied in loving-kindness to his mother. For some time he spent three nights a week with Dr. Bell, "working away at certain geometrical methods of getting the Greek architectural proportions": a business after Fleeming's heart, for he was never so pleased as when he could marry his two devotions, art and science. This was besides, in all likelihood, the beginning of that love and intimate appreciation of things Greek, from the least to the greatest, from the *Agamemnon* (perhaps his favorite tragedy) down to the details of Grecian tailoring, which he used to express in his familiar phrase: "The Greeks were the boys." Dr. Bell—the son of George Joseph, the nephew of Sir Charles, and though he made less use of it than some, a sharer in the distinguished talents of his race—had hit upon the singular fact that certain geometrical intersections gave the proportions of the Doric order. Fleeming, under Dr. Bell's direction, applied the same method to the other orders, and again found the proportions accurately given. Numbers of diagrams were prepared; but the discovery was never given to the world, perhaps because of the dissensions that arose between the authors. For Dr. Bell believed that "these intersections were in some way connected with, or symbolical of, the antagonistic forces at work"; but his pupil and helper, with characteristic trenchancy, brushed aside this mysticism, and interpreted the discovery as "a geometrical method of dividing the spaces or (as might be said) of setting out the work, purely empirical and in no way connected with any laws of either force or beauty." "Many a hard and pleasant fight we had over it," wrote Jenkin, in later years; "and impertinent as it may seem, the pupil is still unconvinced by the arguments of the master." I do not know about the antagonistic forces in the Doric order; in Fleeming they were plain enough; and the Boabdil of these affairs with Dr. Bell was still, like the corrector of Italian consuls, "a great child in everything but information." At the house of Colonel Cleather, he might be seen with a family of children; and with these, there was no word of the Greek orders; with these Fleeming was only an uproarious boy and an entertaining draftsman; so that his coming was the signal for the young people to troop into the play-room, where sometimes the roof rang with romping, and sometimes they gathered quietly about him as he amused them with his pencil.

In another Manchester family, whose name will be familiar to my readers—that of the Gaskells, Fleeming was a frequent visitor. To Mrs. Gaskell, he would often bring his new ideas, a process that many of his later friends will understand and, in their own cases, remember. With the girls, he had "constant fierce wrangles," forcing them to reason out their thoughts and to explain their prepossessions; and I hear from Miss Gaskell that they used to wonder how he could throw all the ardor of his character into the smallest matters, and to admire his unselfish devotion to his parents. Of one of these wrangles, I have found a record most characteristic of the man. Fleeming had been laying down his doctrine that the end justifies the means, and that it is quite right "to boast of your six men-servants to a burglar or to steal a knife to prevent a murder"; and the Miss Gaskells, with girlish loyalty to what is current, had rejected the heresy with indignation. From such passages-at-arms, many retire mortified and ruffled; but Fleeming had no sooner left the house than he fell into delighted admiration of the spirit of his adversaries. From that it was but a step to ask himself "what truth was sticking in their heads"; for even the falsest form of words (in Fleeming's life-long opinion) reposed upon some truth, just as he could "not even allow that people admire ugly things, they admire what is pretty in the ugly thing." And before he sat down to write his letter, he thought he had hit upon the explanation. "I fancy the true idea," he wrote, "is that you must never do yourself or any one else a moral injury—make any man a thief or a liar—for any end"; quite a different thing, as he would have loved to point out, from never stealing or lying. But this perfervid disputant was not always out of key with his audience. One whom he met in the same house announced that she would never again be happy. "What does that signify?" cried Fleeming. "We are not here to be happy, but to be good." And the words (as his hearer writes to me) became to her a sort of motto during life.

From Fairbairn's and Manchester, Fleeming passed to a railway survey in Switzerland, and thence again to Mr. Penn's at Greenwich, where he was engaged as draftsman. There in 1856, we find him in "a terribly busy state, finishing up engines for innumerable gunboats and steam frigates for the ensuing campaign." From half-past eight in the morning till nine or ten at night, he worked in a crowded office among uncongenial comrades, "saluted by chaff, generally low, personal, and not witty," pelted with oranges and apples, regaled with dirty stories, and seeking to suit himself with his surroundings, or (as he writes it) trying to be as little like himself as possible. His lodgings were hard by, "across a dirty green and through some half-built streets of two-storied houses"; he had Carlyle and the poets, engineering and mathematics, to study by himself in such spare time as remained to him; and there were several ladies, young and not so young, with whom he liked to correspond. But not all of these could compensate for the absence of that mother, who had made herself so large a figure in his life, for sorry surroundings, unsuitable society, and work that leaned to the mechanical. "Sunday," says he, "I generally visit some friends in town and seem to swim in clearer water, but the dirty green seems all the dirtier when I get back. Luckily I am fond of my profession, or I could not stand this life." It is a question in my mind, if he could have long continued to stand it without loss. "We are not here to be happy, but to be good," quoted the young philosopher; but no man had a keener appetite for happiness than Fleeming Jenkin. There is a time of life besides when, apart from circumstances, few men are agreeable to their neighbors and still fewer to themselves; and it was at this stage that Fleeming had arrived, later than common and even worse provided. The letter from which I have quoted is the last of his correspondence with Frank Scott, and his last confidential letter to one of his own sex. "If you consider it rightly," he wrote long after, "you will find the want of correspondence no such strange want in men's friendships. There is, believe me, something noble in the metal which does not rust though not burnished by daily use." It is well said; but the last letter to Frank Scott is scarcely of a noble metal. It is plain the writer has outgrown his old self, yet not made acquaintance with the new. This letter from a busy youth of three and twenty, breathes of seventeen: the sickening alternations of conceit and shame, the expense of hope *in vacuo,* the lack of friends, the longing after love; the whole world of egoism under which youth stands groaning, a voluntary Atlas.

With Fleeming this disease was never seemingly severe. The very day before this (to me) distasteful letter, he had written to Miss Bell of Manchester in a sweeter strain; I do not quote the one, I quote the other; fair things are the best. "I keep my own little lodgings," he writes, "but come up every night to see mama" (who was then on a visit to London) "if not kept too late at the works; and have singing lessons once more, and sing *'Donne l'amore è scaltro pargoletto';* and think and talk about you; and listen to mama's projects *de* Stowting. Everything turns to gold at her touch, she's a fairy and no mistake. We go on talking till I have a picture in my head, and can hardly believe at the end that the original is Stowting. Even you don't know half how good mama is; in other things too, which I must not mention. She teaches me how it is not necessary to be very rich to do much good. I begin to understand that mama would find useful occupation and create beauty at the bottom of a volcano. She has little weaknesses, but is a real generous-hearted woman, which I suppose is the finest thing in the world." Though neither mother nor son could be called beautiful, they make a pretty picture; the ugly, generous, ardent woman weaving rainbow illusions; the ugly, clear-sighted, loving son sitting at her side in one of his rare hours of pleasure, half-beguiled, half-amused, wholly admiring, as he listens. But as he goes home, and the fancy pictures fade, and Stowting is once more burdened with debt, and the noisy companions and the long hours of drudgery once more approach, no wonder if the dirty green seems all the dirtier or if Atlas must resume his load.

But in healthy natures, this time of moral teething passes quickly of itself, and is easily alleviated by fresh interests; and already, in the letter to Frank Scott, there are two words of hope: his friends in London, his love for his profession. The last might have saved him; for he was ere long to pass into a new sphere, where all his faculties were to be tried and exercised, and his life to be filled with interest and effort. But it was not left to engineering: another and more influential aim was to be set before him. He must, in any case, have fallen in love; in any case, his love would have ruled his life; and the question of choice was, for the descendant of two such families, a thing of paramount importance. Innocent of the world, fiery, generous, devoted as he was, the son of the wild Jacksons and the facile Jenkins might have been led far astray. By one of those partialities that fill men at once with gratitude and wonder, his choosing was directed well. Or are we to say that by a man's choice in marriage, as by a crucial merit, he deserves his fortune? One thing at least reason may discern: that a man but partly chooses, he also partly forms, his helpmate; and he must in part deserve her, or the treasure is but won for a moment to be lost. Fleeming chanced if you will (and indeed all these opportunities are as "random as blind man's buff") upon a wife who was worthy of him; but he had the wit to know it, the courage to wait and labor for his prize, and the tenderness and chivalry that are required to keep such prizes precious. Upon this point he has himself written well, as usual with fervent optimism, but as usual (in his own phrase) with a truth sticking in his head.

"Love," he wrote, "is not an intuition of the person most suitable to us, most required by us; of the person with whom life flowers and bears fruit. If this were so, the chances of our meeting that person would be small indeed; our intuition would often fail; the blindness of love would then be fatal as it is proverbial. No, love works differently, and in its blindness lies its strength. Man and woman, each strongly desires to be loved, each opens to the other that heart of ideal aspirations which they have often hid till then; each, thus knowing the ideal of the other, tries to fulfil that ideal, each partially succeeds. The greater the love, the greater the success; the nobler the idea of each, the more durable, the more beautiful the effect. Meanwhile the blindness of each to the other's defects enables the transformation to proceed [unobserved], so that when the veil is withdrawn (if it ever is, and this I do not know) neither knows that any change has occurred in the person whom they loved. Do not fear, therefore. I do not tell you that your friend will not change, but as I am sure that her choice can not be that of a man with a base ideal, so I am sure the change will be a safe and a good one. Do not fear that anything you love will vanish, he must love it too."

Among other introductions in London, Fleeming had presented a letter from Mrs. Gaskell to the Alfred Austins. This was a family certain to interest a thoughtful young man. Alfred, the youngest and least known of the Austins, had been a beautiful golden-haired child, petted and kept out of the way of both sport and study by a partial mother. Bred an attorney, he had (like both his brothers) changed his way of life, and was called to the bar when past thirty. A Commission of Enquiry into the state of the poor in Dorsetshire gave him an opportunity of proving his true talents; and he was appointed a Poor Law Inspector, first at Worcester, next at Manchester, where he had to deal with the potato famine and the Irish immigration of the 'forties, and finally in London, where he again distinguished himself during an epidemic of cholera. He was then advanced to the Permanent Secretaryship of Her Majesty's Office of Works and Public Buildings; a position which he filled with perfect competence, but with an extreme of modesty; and on his retirement, in 1868, he was made a Companion of the Bath. While apprentice to a Norwich attorney, Alfred Austin was a frequent visitor in the house of Mr. Barron, a rallying place in those days of intellectual society. Edward Barron, the son of a rich saddler or leather merchant in the Borough, was a man typical of the time. When he was a child, he had once been patted on the head in his father's shop by no less a man than Samuel Johnson, as the Doctor went round the Borough canvassing for Mr. Thrale; and the child was true to this early consecration. "A life of lettered ease spent in provincial retirement," it is thus that the biographer of that remarkable man, William Taylor, announces his subject; and the phrase is equally descriptive of the life of Edward Barron. The pair were close friends: "W. T. and a pipe render everything agreeable," writes Barron in his diary in 1828; and in 1833, after Barron had moved to London and Taylor had tasted the first public failure of his powers, the latter wrote: "To my ever dearest Mr. Barron say, if you please, that I miss him more than I regret him—that I acquiesce in his retirement from Norwich, because I could ill brook his observation of my increasing debility of mind." This chosen companion of William Taylor must himself have been no ordinary man; and he was the friend besides of Borrow, whom I find him helping in his Latin. But he had no desire for popular distinction, lived privately, married a daughter of Dr. Enfield of Enfield's *Speaker,* and devoted his time to the education of his family, in a deliberate and scholarly fashion, and with certain traits of stoicism, that would surprise a modern. From these children we must single out his youngest daughter, Eliza, who learned under his care to be a sound Latin, an elegant Grecian, and to suppress emotion without outward sign after the manner of the Godwin school. This was the more notable, as the girl really derived from the Enfields; whose highflown romantic temper, I wish I could find space to illustrate. She was but seven years old, when Alfred Austin remarked and fell in love with her; and the union thus early prepared was singularly full. Where the husband and wife differed, and they did so on momentous subjects, they differed with perfect temper and content; and in the conduct of life, and in depth and durability of love, they were at one. Each full of high spirits, each practised something of the same repression: no sharp word was uttered in their house. The same point of honor ruled them: a guest was sacred and stood within the pale from criticism. It was a house, besides, of unusual intellectual tension. Mrs. Austin remembered, in the early days of the marriage, the three brothers, John, Charles, and Alfred, marching to and fro, each with his hands behind his back, and "reasoning high" till morning; and how, like Dr. Johnson, they would cheer their speculations with as many as fifteen cups of tea. And though, before the date of Fleeming's visit, the brothers were separated, Charles long ago retired from the world at Brandeston, and John already near his end in the "rambling old house" at Weybridge, Alfred Austin and his wife were still a center of much intellectual society, and still, as indeed they remained until the last, youthfully alert in mind. There was but one child of the marriage, Anne, and she was herself something new for the eyes of the young visitor; brought up, as she had been, like her mother before her, to the standard of a man's acquirements. Only one art had she been denied; she must not learn the violin—the thought was too monstrous even for the Austins; and indeed it would seem as if that tide of reform which we may date from the days of Mary Wollstonecraft had in some degree even receded; for though Miss Austin was suffered to learn Greek, the accomplishment was kept secret like a piece of guilt. But whether this stealth was caused by a backward movement in public thought since the time of Edward Barron, or by the change from enlightened Norwich to barbarian London, I have no means of judging.

When Fleeming presented his letter, he fell in love at first sight with Mrs. Austin and the life and atmosphere of the house. There was in the society of the Austins, outward, stoical conformers to the world, something gravely suggestive of essential eccentricity, something unpretentiously breathing of intellectual effort, that could not fail to hit the fancy of this hot-brained boy. The unbroken enamel of courtesy, the self-restraint, the dignified kindness of these married folk, had besides a particular attraction for their visitor. He could not but compare what he saw, with what he knew of his mother and himself. Whatever virtues Fleeming possessed, he could never count on being civil; whatever brave, true-hearted qualities he was able to admire in Mrs. Jenkin, mildness of demeanor was not one of them. And here he found persons who were the equals of his mother and himself in intellect and width of interest, and the equals of his father in mild urbanity of disposition. Show Fleeming an active virtue, and he always loved it. He went away from that house struck through with admiration, and vowing to himself that his own married life should be upon that pattern, his wife (whoever she might be) like Eliza Barron, himself such another husband as Alfred Austin. What is more strange, he not only brought away, but left behind him, golden opinions. He must have been—he was, I am told—a trying lad; but there shone out of him such a light of innocent candor, enthusiasm, intelligence, and appreciation, that to persons already some way forward in years, and thus able to enjoy indulgently the perennial comedy of youth, the sight of him was delightful. By a pleasant coincidence, there was one person in the house whom he did not appreciate and who did not appreciate him: Anne Austin, his future wife. His boyish vanity ruffled her; his appearance, never impressive, was then, by reason of obtrusive boyishness, still less so; she found occasion to put him in the wrong by correcting a false quantity; and when Mr. Austin, after doing his visitor the almost unheard of honor of accompanying him to the door, announced "that was what young men were like in my time"—she could only reply, looking on her handsome father, "I thought they had been better looking."

This first visit to the Austins took place in 1855; and it seems it was some time before Fleeming began to know his mind; and yet longer ere he ventured to show it. The corrected quantity, to those who knew him well, will seem to have played its part; he was the man always to reflect over a correction and to admire the castigator. And fall in love he did; not hurriedly, but step by step, not blindly, but with critical discrimination; not in the fashion of Romeo, but before he was done, with all Romeo's ardor and more than Romeo's faith. The high favor to which he presently rose in the esteem of Alfred Austin and his wife might well give him ambitious notions; but the poverty of the present and the obscurity of the future were there to give him pause; and when his aspirations began to settle round Miss Austin, he tasted, perhaps for the only time in his life, the pangs of diffidence. There was indeed opening before him a wide door of hope. He had changed into the service of Messrs. Liddell & Gordon; these gentlemen had begun to dabble in the new field of marine telegraphy; and Fleeming was already face to face with his life's work. That impotent sense of his own value, as of a ship aground, which makes one of the agonies of youth, began to fall from him. New problems which he was endowed to solve, vistas of new enquiry which he was fitted to explore, opened before him continually. His gifts had found their avenue and goal. And with this pleasure of effective exercise, there must have sprung up at once the hope of what is called by the world success. But from these low beginnings, it was a far look upward to Miss Austin: the favor of the loved one seems always more than problematical to any lover; the consent of parents must be always more than doubtful to a young man with a small salary and no capital except capacity and hope. But Fleeming was not the lad to lose any good thing for the lack of trial; and at length, in the autumn of 1857, this boyish-sized, boyish-mannered, and superlatively ill-dressed young engineer, entered the house of the Austins, with such sinkings as we may fancy, and asked leave to pay his addresses to the daughter. Mrs. Austin already loved him like a son, she was but too glad to give him her consent; Mr. Austin reserved the right to inquire into his character; from neither was there a word about his prospects, by neither was his income mentioned. "Are these people," he wrote, struck with wonder at this dignified disinterestedness, "are these people the same as other people?" It was not till he was armed with this permission, that Miss Austin even suspected the nature of his hopes: so strong, in this unmannerly boy, was the principle of true courtesy; so powerful, in this impetuous nature, the springs of self-repression. And yet a boy he was; a boy in heart and mind; and it was with a boy's chivalry and frankness that he won his wife. His conduct was a model of honor, hardly of tact; to conceal love from the loved one, to court her parents, to be silent and discreet till these are won, and then without preparation to approach the lady—these are not arts that I would recommend for imitation. They lead to final refusal. Nothing saved Fleeming from that fate, but one circumstance that can not be counted upon—the hearty favor of the mother, and one gift that is inimitable and that never failed him throughout life, the gift of a nature essentially noble and outspoken. A happy and high-minded anger flashed through his despair: it won for him his wife.

Nearly two years passed before it was possible to marry: two years of activity, now in London; now at Birkenhead, fitting out ships, inventing new machinery for new purposes, and dipping into electrical experiment; now in the *Elba* on his first telegraph cruise between Sardinia and Algiers: a busy and delightful period of bounding ardor, incessant toil, growing hope and fresh interests, with behind and through all, the image of his beloved. A few extracts from his correspondence with his betrothed will give the note of these truly joyous years. "My profession gives me all the excitement and interest I ever hope for, but the sorry jade is obviously jealous of you."—" 'Poor Fleeming,' in spite of wet, cold and wind, clambering over moist, tarry slips, wandering among pools of slush in waste places inhabited by wandering locomotives, grows visibly stronger, has dismissed his office cough and cured his toothache."—"The whole of the paying out and lifting machinery must be designed and ordered in two or three days, and I am half crazy with work. I like it, though: it's like a good ball, the excitement carries you through."—"I was running to and from the ships and warehouse through fierce gusts of rain and wind till near eleven, and you can not think what a pleasure it was to be blown about and think of you in your pretty dress."—"I am at the works till ten and sometimes till eleven. But I have a nice office to sit in, with a fire to myself, and bright brass scientific instruments all round me, and books to read, and experiments to make, and enjoy myself amazingly. I find the study of electricity so entertaining that I am apt to neglect my other work." And for a last taste, "yesterday I had some charming electrical experiments. What shall I compare them to—a new song? a Greek play?"

It was at this time besides that he made the acquaintance of Professor, now Sir William, Thomson. To describe the part played by these two in each other's lives would lie out of my way. They worked together on the Committee on Electrical Standards; they served together at the laying down or the repair of many deep-sea cables; and Sir William was regarded by Fleeming, not only with the "worship" (the word is his own) due to great scientific gifts, but with an ardor of personal friendship not frequently excelled. To their association, Fleeming brought the valuable element of a practical understanding; but he never thought or spoke of himself where Sir William was in question; and I recall quite in his last days, a singular instance of this modest loyalty to one whom he admired and loved. He drew up a paper, in a quite personal interest, of his own services; yet even here he must step out of his way, he must add, where it had no claim to be added, his opinion that, in their joint work, the contributions of Sir William had been always greatly the most valuable. Again, I shall not readily forget with what emotion he once told me an incident of their associated travels. On one of the mountain ledges of Madeira, Fleeming's pony bolted between Sir William and the precipice above; by strange good fortune and thanks to the steadiness of Sir William's horse, no harm was done; but for the moment, Fleeming saw his friend hurled into the sea, and almost by his own act: it was a memory that haunted him.

CHAPTER IV

1859—1868

Fleeming's Marriage—His Married Life—Professional Difficulties—Life at Claygate—Illness of Mrs. F. Jenkin; and of Fleeming—Appointment to the Chair at Edinburgh.

ON SATURDAY, February 26, 1859, profiting by a holiday of four days, Fleeming was married to Miss Austin at Northiam: a place connected not only with his own family but with that of his bride as well. By Tuesday morning, he was at work again, fitting out cableships at Birkenhead. Of the walk from his lodgings to the works, I find a graphic sketch in one of his letters: "Out over the railway bridge, along a wide road raised to the level of a ground floor above the land, which, not being built upon, harbors puddles, ponds, pigs, and Irish hovels;—so to the dock warehouses, four huge piles of buildings with no windows, surrounded by a wall about twelve feet high;—in through the large gates, round which hang twenty or thirty rusty Irish playing pitch and toss and waiting for employment;—on along the railway, which came in at the same gates and which branches down between each vast block—past a pilot-engine butting refractory trucks into their places—on to the last block, [and] down the branch, sniffing the guano-scented air and detecting the old bones. The hartshorn flavor of the guano becomes very strong, as I near the docks, where, across the *Elba's* decks, a huge vessel is discharging her cargo of the brown dust, and where huge vessels have been discharging that same cargo for the last five months." This was the walk he took his young wife on the morrow of his return. She had been used to the society of lawyers and civil servants, moving in that circle which seems to itself the pivot of the nation and is in truth only a clique like another; and Fleeming was to her the nameless assistant of a nameless firm of engineers, doing his inglorious business, as she now saw for herself, among unsavory surroundings. But, when their walk brought them within view of the river, she beheld a sight to her of the most novel beauty: four great, sea-going ships dressed out with flags. "How lovely!" she cried. "What is it for?"—"For you," said Fleeming. Her surprise was only equaled by her pleasure. But perhaps, for what we may call private fame, there is no life like that of the engineer; who is a great man in out-of-the-way places, by the dockside or on the desert island or in populous ships, and remains quite unheard of in the coteries of London. And Fleeming had already made his mark among the few who had an opportunity of knowing him.

His marriage was the one decisive incident of his career; from that moment until the day of his death, he had one thought to which all the rest were tributary, the thought of his wife. No one could know him even slightly, and not remark the absorbing greatness of that sentiment; nor can any picture of the man be drawn that does not in proportion dwell upon it. This is a delicate task; but if we are to leave behind us (as we wish) some presentment of the friend we have lost, it is a task that must be undertaken.

For all his play of mind and fancy, for all his indulgence—and, as time went on, he grew indulgent—Fleeming had views of duty that were even stern. He was too shrewd a student of his fellow men to remain long content with rigid formulæ of conduct. Iron-bound, impersonal ethics, the procrustean bed of rules, he soon saw at their true value as the deification of averages. "As to Miss (I declare I forgot her name) being bad," I find him writing, "people only mean that she has broken the Decalogue—which is not at all the same thing. People who have kept in the highroad of life really have less opportunity for taking a comprehensive view of it than those who have leaped over the hedges and strayed up the hills; not but what the hedges are very necessary, and our stray travelers often have a weary time of it. So, you may say, have those in the dusty roads." Yet he was himself a very stern respecter of the hedgerows; sought safety and found dignity in the obvious path of conduct; and would palter with no simple and recognized duty of his epoch. Of marriage in particular, of the bond so formed, of the obligations incurred, of the debt men owe to their children, he conceived in a truly antique spirit: not to blame others, but to constrain himself. It was not to blame, I repeat, that he held these views; for others, he could make a large allowance; and yet he tacitly expected of his friends and his wife a high standard of behavior. Nor was it always easy to wear the armor of that ideal.

Acting upon these beliefs; conceiving that he had indeed "given himself" (in the full meaning of these words) for better, for worse; painfully alive to his defects of temper and deficiency in charm; resolute to make up for these; thinking last of himself: Fleeming was in some ways the very man to have made a noble uphill fight of an unfortunate marriage. In other ways, it is true he was one of the most unfit for such a trial. And it was his beautiful destiny to remain to the last hour the same absolute and romantic lover, who had shown to his new bride the flag-draped vessels in the Mersey. No fate is altogether easy; but trials are our touchstone, trials overcome our reward; and it was given to Fleeming to conquer. It was given to him to live for another, not as a task, but till the end as an enchanting pleasure. "People may write novels," he wrote in 1869, "and other people may write poems, but not a man or woman among them can write to say how happy a man may be, who is desperately in love with his wife after ten years of marriage." And again in 1885, after more than twenty-six years of marriage, and within but five weeks of his death: "Your first letter from Bournemouth," he wrote, "gives me heavenly pleasure—for which I thank heaven and you too—who are my heaven on earth." The mind hesitates whether to say that such a man has been more good or more fortunate.

Any woman (it is the defect of her sex) comes sooner to the stable mind of maturity than any man; and Jenkin was to the end of a most deliberate growth. In the next chapter, when I come to deal with his telegraphic voyages and give some taste of his correspondence, the reader will still find him at twenty-five an arrant schoolboy. His wife besides was more thoroughly educated than he. In many ways she was able to teach him, and he proud to be taught; in many ways she outshone him, and he delighted to be outshone. All these superiorities, and others that, after the manner of lovers, he no doubt forged for himself, added as time went on to the humility of his original love. Only once, in all I know of his career, did he show a touch of smallness. He could not learn to sing correctly; his wife told him so and desisted from her lessons; and the mortification was so sharply felt that for years he could not to be induced to go to a concert, instanced himself as a typical man without an ear, and never sang again. I tell it; for the fact that this stood singular in his behavior, and really amazed all who knew him, is the happiest way I can imagine to commend the tenor of his simplicity; and because it illustrates his feeling for his wife. Others were always welcome to laugh at him; if it amused them, or if it amused him, he would proceed undisturbed with his occupation, his vanity invulnerable. With his wife it was different: his wife had laughed at his singing; and for twenty years the fiber ached. Nothing, again, was more notable than the formal chivalry of this unmannered man to the person on earth with whom he was the most familiar. He was conscious of his own innate and often rasping vivacity and roughness; and he was never forgetful of his first visit to the Austins and the vow he had registered on his return. There was thus an artificial element in his punctilio that at times might almost raise a smile. But it stood on noble grounds; for this was how he sought to shelter from his own petulance the woman who was to him the symbol of the household and to the end the beloved of his youth.

I wish in this chapter to chronicle small beer; taking a hasty glance at some ten years of married life and of professional struggle; and reserving till the next all the more interesting matter of his cruises. Of his achievements and their worth, it is not for me to speak: his friend and partner, Sir William Thomson, has contributed a note on the subject, which will be found in the Appendix, and to which I must refer the reader. He is to conceive in the mean while for himself Fleeming's manifold engagements; his service on the Committee on Electrical Standards, his lectures on electricity at Chatham, his chair at the London University, his partnership with Sir William Thomson and Mr. Varley in many ingenious patents, his growing credit with engineers and men of science; and he is to bear in mind that of all this activity and acquist of reputation, the immediate profit was scanty. Soon after his marriage, Fleeming had left the service of Messrs. Liddell & Gordon, and entered into a general engineering partnership with Mr. Forde, a gentleman in a good way of business. It was a fortunate partnership in this, that the parties retained their mutual respect unlessened and separated with regret; but men's affairs, like men, have their times of sickness, and by one of these unaccountable variations, for hard upon ten years the business was disappointing and the profits meager. "Inditing drafts of German railways which will never get made": it is thus I find Fleeming, not without a touch of bitterness, describe his occupation. Even the patents hung fire at first. There was no salary to rely on; children were coming and growing up; the prospect was often anxious. In the days of his courtship, Fleeming had written to Miss Austin a dissuasive picture of the trials of poverty, assuring her these were no figments but truly bitter to support; he told her this, he wrote, beforehand, so that when the pinch came and she suffered, she should not be disappointed in herself nor tempted to doubt her own magnanimity: a letter of admirable wisdom and solicitude. But now that the trouble came, he bore it very lightly. It was his principle, as he once prettily expressed it, "to enjoy each day's happiness, as it arises, like birds or children." His optimism, if driven out at the door, would come in again by the window; if it found nothing but blackness in the present, would hit upon some ground of consolation in the future or the past. And his courage and energy were indefatigable. In the year 1863, soon after the birth of their first son, they moved into a cottage at Claygate near

Esher; and about this time, under manifold troubles both of money and health, I find him writing from abroad: "The country will give us, please God, health and strength. I will love and cherish you more than ever, you shall go where you wish, you shall receive whom you wish—and as for money, you shall have that too. I can not be mistaken. I have now measured myself with many men. I do not feel weak, I do not feel that I shall fail. In many things I have succeeded, and I will in this. And meanwhile the time of waiting, which, please Heaven, shall not be long, shall also not be so bitter. Well, well, I promise much, and do not know at this moment how you and the dear child are. If he is but better, courage, my girl, for I see light."

This cottage at Claygate stood just without the village, well surrounded with trees and commanding a pleasant view. A piece of the garden was turfed over to form a croquet green, and Fleeming became (I need scarce say) a very ardent player. He grew ardent, too, in gardening. This he took up at first to please his wife, having no natural inclination; but he had no sooner set his hand to it, than, like everything else he touched, it became with him a passion. He budded roses, he plotted cuttings in the coach-house; if there came a change of weather at night, he would rise out of bed to protect his favorites; when he was thrown with a dull companion, it was enough for him to discover in the man a fellow gardener; on his travels, he would go out of his way to visit nurseries and gather hints; and to the end of his life, after other occupations prevented him putting his own hand to the spade, he drew up a yearly programme for his gardener, in which all details were regulated. He had begun by this time to write. His paper on Darwin, which had the merit of convincing on one point the philosopher himself, had indeed been written before this in London lodgings; but his pen was not idle at Claygate; and it was here he wrote (among other things) that review of *"Fecundity, Fertility, Sterility, and Allied Topics,"* which Dr. Matthews Duncan prefixed by way of introduction to the second edition of the work. The mere act of writing seems to cheer the vanity of the most incompetent; but a correction accepted by Darwin, and a whole review borrowed and reprinted by Matthews Duncan, are compliments of a rare strain, and to a man still unsuccessful must have been precious indeed. There was yet a third of the same kind in store for him; and when Munro himself owned that he had found instruction in the paper on Lucretius, we may say that Fleeming had been crowned in the capitol of reviewing.

Croquet, charades, Christmas magic lanterns for the village children, an amateur concert or a review article in the evening; plenty of hard work by day; regular visits to meetings of the British Association, from one of which I find him characteristically writing: "I can not say that I have had any amusement yet, but I am enjoying the dulness and dry bustle of the whole thing"; occasional visits abroad on business, when he would find the time to glean (as I have said) gardening hints for himself, and old folk-songs or new fashions of dress for his wife; and the continual study and care of his children: these were the chief elements of his life. Nor were friends wanting. Captain and Mrs. Jenkin, Mr. and Mrs. Austin, Clerk Maxwell, Miss Bell of Manchester, and others came to them on visits. Mr. Hertslet of the Foreign Office, his wife and his daughter, were neighbors and proved kind friends; in 1867 the Howitts came to Claygate and sought the society of "the two bright, clever young people";[1] and in a house close by, Mr. Frederick Ricketts came to live with his family. Mr. Ricketts was a valued friend during his short life; and when he was lost with every circumstance of heroism in the *La Platta,* Fleeming mourned him sincerely.

I think I shall give the best idea of Fleeming in this time of his early married life, by a few sustained extracts from his letters to his wife, while she was absent on a visit in 1864.

"*Nov.* 11.—Sunday was too wet to walk to Isleworth, for which I was sorry, so I staid and went to Church and thought of you at Ardwick all through the Commandments, and heard Dr. —— expound in a remarkable way a prophecy of St. Paul's about Roman Catholics, which *mutatis mutandis* would do very well for Protestants in some parts. Then I made a little nursery of borecole and Enfield market cabbage, grubbing in wet earth with leggings and gray coat on. Then I tidied up the coach-house to my own and Christine's admiration. Then encouraged by *bouts-rimés* I wrote you a copy of verses; high time I think; I shall just save my tenth year of knowing my lady-love without inditing poetry or rimes to her.

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[1] *Reminiscences of My Later Life,* by Mary Howitt, *Good Words,* May, 1886.

"Then I rummaged over the box with my father's letters and found interesting notes from myself. One I should say my first letter, which little Austin I should say would rejoice to see and shall see—with a drawing of a cottage and a spirited 'cob.' What was more to the purpose, I found with it a paste-cutter which Mary begged humbly for Christine and I generously gave this morning.

"Then I read some of Congreve. There are admirable scenes in the manner of Sheridan; all wit and no character, or rather one character in a great variety of situations and scenes. I could show you some scenes, but others are too coarse even for my stomach hardened by a course of French novels.

"All things look so happy for the rain.

"*Nov.* 16.—Verbenas looking well. . . . I am but a poor creature without you; I have naturally no spirit or fun or enterprise in me. Only a kind of mechanical capacity for ascertaining whether two really is half four, etc.; but when you are near me I can fancy that I too shine, and vainly suppose it to be my proper light; whereas by my extreme darkness when you are not by, it clearly can only be by a reflected brilliance that I seem aught but dull. Then for the moral part of me: if it were not for you and little Odden, I should feel by no means sure that I had any affection power in me. . . . Even the muscular me suffers a sad deterioration in your absence. I don't get up when I ought to, I have snoozed in my chair after dinner; I do not go in at the garden with my wonted vigor, and feel ten times as tired as usual with a walk in your absence; so you see, when you are not by, I am a person without ability, affections or vigor, but droop dull, selfish, and spiritless; can you wonder that I love you?

"*Nov.* 17.—. . . I am very glad we married young. I would not have missed these five years, no, not for any hopes; they are my own.

"*Nov.* 30.—I got through my Chatham lecture very fairly though almost all my apparatus went astray. I dined at the mess, and got home to Isleworth the same evening; your father very kindly sitting up for me.

"*Dec.* 1.—Back at dear Claygate. Many cuttings flourish, especially those which do honor to your hand. Your Californian annuals are up and about. Badger is fat, the grass green. . . .

"*Dec.* 3.—Odden will not talk of you, while you are away, having inherited, as I suspect, his father's way of declining to consider a subject which is painful, as your absence is. . . . I certainly should like to learn Greek and I think it would be a capital pastime for the long winter evenings. . . . How things are misrated! I declare croquet is a noble occupation compared to the pursuits of business men. As for so-called idleness—that is, one form of it—I vow it is the noblest aim of man. When idle, one can love, one can be good, feel kindly to all, devote oneself to others, be thankful for existence, educate one's mind, one's heart, one's body. When busy, as I am busy now or have been busy to-day, one feels just as you sometimes felt when you were too busy, owing to want of servants.

"*Dec.* 5.—On Sunday I was at Isleworth, chiefly engaged in playing with Odden. We had the most enchanting walk together through the brickfields. It was very muddy, and, as he remarked, not fit for Nanna, but fit for us *men.* The dreary waste of bared earth, thatched sheds and standing water, was a paradise to him; and when we walked up planks to deserted mixing and crushing mills, and actually saw where the clay was stirred with long iron prongs, and chalk or lime ground with 'a tind of a mill,' his expression of contentment and triumphant heroism knew no limit to its beauty. Of course on returning I found Mrs. Austin looking out at the door in an anxious manner, and thinking we had been out quite long enough. . . . I am reading Don Quixote chiefly and am his fervent admirer, but I am so sorry he did not place his affections on a Dulcinea of somewhat worthier stamp. In fact I think there must be a mistake about it. Don Quixote might and would serve his lady in most preposterous fashion, but I am sure he would have chosen a lady of merit. He imagined her to be such no doubt, and drew a charming picture of her occupations by the banks of the river; but in his other imaginations, there was some kind of peg on which to hang the false costumes he created; windmills are big, and wave their arms like giants; sheep in the distance are somewhat like an army; a little boat on the river-side must look much the same whether enchanted or belonging to millers; but except that Dulcinea is a woman, she bears no resemblance at all to the damsel of his imagination."

At the time of these letters, the oldest son only was born to them. In September of the next year, with the birth of the second, Charles Frewen, there befell Fleeming a terrible alarm and what proved to be a lifelong misfortune. Mrs. Jenkin was taken suddenly and alarmingly ill; Fleeming ran a matter of two miles to fetch the doctor, and drenched with sweat as he was, returned with him at once in an open gig. On their arrival at the house, Mrs. Jenkin half unconsciously took and kept hold of her husband's hand. By the doctor's orders, windows and doors were set open to create a thorough draft, and the patient was on no account to be disturbed. Thus, then, did Fleeming pass the whole of that night, crouching on the floor in the draft and not daring to move lest he should wake the sleeper. He had never been strong; energy had stood him instead of vigor; and the result of that night's exposure was flying rheumatism varied by settled sciatica. Sometimes it quite disabled him, sometimes it was less acute; but he was rarely free from it until his death. I knew him for many years; for more than ten we were closely intimate; I have lived with him for weeks; and during all this time, he only once referred to his infirmity and then perforce as an excuse for some trouble he put me to, and so slightly worded that I paid no heed. This is a good measure of his courage under sufferings of which none but the untried will think lightly. And I think it worth noting how this optimist was acquainted with pain. It will seem strange only to the superficial. The disease of pessimism springs never from real troubles, which it braces men to bear, which it delights men to bear well. Nor does it readily spring at all, in minds that have conceived of life as a field of ordered duties, not as a chase in which to hunt for gratifications. "We are not here to be happy, but to be good"; I wish he had mended the phrase: "We are not here to be happy, but to try to be good," comes nearer the modesty of truth. With such old-fashioned morality, it is possible to get through life, and see the worst of it, and feel some of the worst of it, and still acquiesce piously and even gladly in man's fate. Feel some of the worst of it, I say; for some of the rest of the worst is, by this simple faith, excluded.

It was in the year 1868, that the clouds finally rose. The business in partnership with Mr. Forde began suddenly to pay well; about the same time the patents showed themselves a valuable property; and but a little after, Fleeming was appointed to the new chair of engineering in the University of Edinburgh. Thus, almost at once, pecuniary embarrassments passed forever out of his life. Here is his own epilogue to the time at Claygate, and his anticipations of the future in Edinburgh.

". . . . The dear old house at Claygate is not let and the pretty garden a mass of weeds. I feel rather as if we had behaved unkindly to them. We were very happy there, but now that it is over I am conscious of the weight of anxiety as to money which I bore all the time. With you in the garden, with Austin in the coach-house, with pretty songs in the little, low white room, with the moonlight in the dear room up-stairs, ah, it was perfect; but the long walk, wondering, pondering, fearing, scheming, and the dusty jolting railway, and the horrid fusty office with its endless disappointments, they are well gone. It is well enough to fight and scheme and bustle about in the eager crowd here [in London] for a while now and then, but not for a lifetime. What I have now is just perfect. Study for winter, action for summer, lovely country for recreation, a pleasant town for talk. . . ."

CHAPTER V

Notes of Telegraph Voyages, 1858 to 1873

BUT it is now time to see Jenkin at his life's work. I have before me a certain imperfect series of letters written, as he says, "at hazard, for one does not know at the time what is important and what is not"; the earlier addressed to Miss Austin, after the betrothal; the later to Mrs. Jenkin the young wife. I should premise that I have allowed myself certain editorial freedoms, leaving out and splicing together much as he himself did with the Bona cable: thus edited the letters speak for themselves, and will fail to interest none who love adventure or activity. Addressed as they were to her whom he called his "dear engineering pupil," they give a picture of his work so clear that a child may understand, and so attractive that I am half afraid their publication may prove harmful, and still further crowd the ranks of a profession already overcrowded. But their most engaging quality is the picture of the writer; with his indomitable self-confidence and courage, his readiness in every pinch of circumstance or change of plan, and his ever fresh enjoyment of the whole web of human experience, nature, adventure, science, toil, and rest, society and solitude. It should be borne in mind that the writer of these buoyant pages was, even while he wrote, harassed by responsibility, stinted in sleep and often struggling with the prostration of sea-sickness. To this last enemy, which he never overcame, I have omitted, in my search after condensation, a good many references; if they were all left, such was the man's temper, they would not represent one hundredth part of what he suffered, for he was never given to complaint. But indeed he had met this ugly trifle, as he met every thwart circumstance of life, with a certain pleasure of pugnacity; and suffered it not to check him, whether in the exercise of his profession or the pursuit of amusement.

I

"Birkenhead: April 18, 1858.

"Well, you should know, Mr. —— having a contract to lay down a submarine telegraph from Sardinia to Africa failed three times in the attempt. The distance from land to land is about 140 miles. On the first occasion, after proceeding some 70 miles, he had to cut the cable—the cause I forget; he tried again, same result; then picked up about 20 miles of the lost cable, spliced on a new piece, and very nearly got across that time, but ran short of cable, and when but a few miles off Galita in very deep water, had to telegraph to London for more cable to be manufactured and sent out while he tried to stick to the end: for five days, I think, he lay there sending and receiving messages, but heavy weather coming on the cable parted and Mr. —— went home in despair—at least I should think so.

"He then applied to those eminent engineers, R. S. Newall & Co., who made and laid down a cable for him last autumn—Fleeming Jenkin (at the time in considerable mental agitation) having the honor of fitting out the *Elba* for that purpose." [On this occasion, the *Elba* has no cable to lay; but] "is going out in the beginning of May to endeavor to fish up the cables Mr.—— lost. There are two ends at or near the shore: the third will probably not be found within 20 miles from land. One of these ends will be passed over a very big pulley or sheave at the bows, passed six times round a big barrel or drum; which will be turned round by a steam engine on deck, and thus wind up the cable, while the *Elba* slowly steams ahead. The cable is not wound round and round the drum as your silk is wound on its reel, but on the contrary never goes round more than six times, going off at one side as it comes on at the other, and going down into the hold of the *Elba* to be coiled along in a big coil or skein.

"I went down to Gateshead to discuss with Mr. Newall the form which this tolerably simple idea should take, and have been busy since I came here drawing, ordering, and putting up the machinery—uninterfered with, thank goodness, by any one. I own I like responsibility; it flatters one and then, your father might say, I have more to gain than to lose. Moreover I do like this bloodless, painless combat with wood and iron, forcing the stubborn rascals to do my will, licking the clumsy cubs into an active shape, seeing the child of to-day's thought working to-morrow in full vigor at his appointed desk.

"May 12.

"By dint of bribing, bullying, cajoling, and going day by day to see the state of things ordered, all my work is very nearly ready now; but those who have neglected these precautions are of course disappointed. Five hundred fathoms of chain [were] ordered by —— some three weeks since, to be ready by the 10th without fail; he sends for it to-day—150 fathoms all they can let us have by the 15th—and how the rest is to be got, who knows? He ordered a boat a month since and yesterday we could see nothing of her but the keel and about two planks. I could multiply instances without end. At first one goes nearly mad with vexation at these things; but one finds so soon that they are the rule, that then it becomes necessary to feign a rage one does not feel. I look upon it as the natural order of things, that if I order a thing, it will not be done—if by accident it gets done, it will certainly be done wrong: the only remedy being to watch the performance at every stage.

"To-day was a grand field-day. I had steam up and tried the engine against pressure or resistance. One part of the machinery is driven by a belt or strap of leather. I always had my doubts this might slip; and so it did, wildly. I had made provision for doubling it, putting on two belts instead of one. No use—off they went, slipping round and off the pulleys instead of driving the machinery. Tighten them—no use. More strength there—down with the lever—smash something, tear the belts, but get them tight—now then, stand clear, on with the steam;—and the belts slip away as if nothing held them. Men begin to look queer; the circle of quidnuncs make sage remarks.

Once more—no use. I begin to know I ought to feel sheepish and beat, but somehow I feel cocky instead. I laugh and say, 'Well, I am bound to break something down'—and suddenly see. 'Oho, there's the place; get weight on there, and the belt won't slip.' With much labor, on go the belts again. 'Now then, a spar thro' there and six men's weight on; mind you're not carried away.'—'Ay, ay, sir.' But evidently no one believes in the plan. 'Hurrah, round she goes—stick to your spar. All right, shut off steam.' And the difficulty is vanquished.

"This or such as this (not always quite so bad) occurs hour after hour, while five hundred tons of coal are rattling down into the holds and bunkers, riveters are making their infernal row all round, and riggers bend the sails and fit the rigging:—a sort of Pandemonium, it appeared to young Mrs. Newall, who was here on Monday and half-choked with guano; but it suits the likes o' me.

"S.S. *Elba,* River Mersey: May 17.

"We are delayed in the river by some of the ship's papers not being ready. Such a scene at the dock gates. Not a sailor will join till the last moment; and then, just as the ship forges ahead through the narrow pass, beds and baggage fly on board, the men half tipsy clutch at the rigging, the captain swears, the women scream and sob, the crowd cheer and laugh, while one or two pretty little girls stand still and cry outright, regardless of all eyes.

"These two days of comparative peace have quite set me on my legs again. I was getting worn and weary with anxiety and work. As usual I have been delighted with my shipwrights. I gave them some beer on Saturday, making a short oration. To-day when they went ashore and I came on board, they gave three cheers, whether for me or the ship I hardly know, but I had just bid them good-by, and the ship was out of hail; but I was startled and hardly liked to claim the compliment by acknowledging it.

"S.S. *Elba:* May 25.

"My first intentions of a long journal have been fairly frustrated by sea-sickness. On Tuesday last about noon we started from the Mersey in very dirty weather, and were hardly out of the river when we met a gale from the southwest and a heavy sea, both right in our teeth; and the poor *Elba* had a sad shaking. Had I not been very sea-sick, the sight would have been exciting enough, as I sat wrapped in my oilskins on the bridge; [but] in spite of all my efforts to talk, to eat, and to grin, I soon collapsed into imbecility; and I was heartily thankful toward evening to find myself in bed.

"Next morning, I fancied it grew quieter and, as I listened, heard, 'Let go the anchor,' whereon I concluded we had run into Holyhead Harbor, as was indeed the case. All that day we lay in Holyhead, but I could neither read nor write nor draw. The captain of another steamer which had put in came on board, and we all went for a walk on the hill; and in the evening there was an exchange of presents. We gave some tobacco, I think, and received a cat, two pounds of fresh butter, a Cumberland ham, *Westward Ho!* and Thackeray's *English Humourists.* I was astonished at receiving two such fair books from the captain of a little coasting screw. Our captain said he [the captain of the screw] had plenty of money, five or six hundred a year at least.—'What in the world makes him go rolling about in such a craft, then?'—'Why, I fancy he's reckless; he's desperate in love with that girl I mentioned, and she won't look at him.' Our honest, fat, old captain says this very grimly in his thick, broad voice.

"My head won't stand much writing yet, so I will run up and take a look at the blue night sky off the coast of Portugal.

"May 26.

"A nice lad of some two and twenty, A—— by name, goes out in a nondescript capacity as part purser, part telegraph clerk, part generally useful person. A—— was a great comfort during the miseries [of the gale]; for when, with a dead head wind and a heavy sea, plates, books, papers, stomachs were being rolled about in sad confusion, we generally managed to lie on our backs, and grin, and try discordant staves of the *Flowers of the Forest* and the *Low-backed Car.* We could sing and laugh, when we could do nothing else; though A—— was ready to swear after each fit was past, that that was the first time he had felt anything, and at this moment would declare in broad Scotch that he'd never been sick at all, qualifying the oath with 'except for a minute now and then.' He brought a cornet-à-piston to practise on, having had three weeks' instructions on that melodious instrument; and if you could hear the horrid sounds that come! especially at heavy rolls. When I hint he is not improving, there comes a confession: 'I don't feel quite right yet, you see!' But he blows away manfully, and in self-defense I try to roar the tune louder.

"11.30 P. M.

"Long past Cape St. Vincent now. We went within about 400 yards of the cliffs and lighthouse in a calm moonlight, with porpoises springing from the sea, the men crooning long ballads as they lay idle on the forecastle and the sails flapping uncertain on the yards. As we passed, there came a sudden breeze from land, hot and heavy scented; and now as I write its warm, rich flavor contrasts strongly with the salt air we have been breathing.

"I paced the deck with H——, the second mate, and in the quiet night drew a confession that he was engaged to be married, and gave him a world of good advice. He is a very nice, active, little fellow, with a broad Scotch tongue and 'dirty little rascal' appearance. He had a sad disappointment at starting. Having been second mate on the last voyage, when the first mate was discharged, he took charge of the *Elba* all the time she was in port, and of course looked forward to being chief mate this trip. Liddell promised him the post. He had not authority to do this; and when Newall heard of it, he appointed another man. Fancy poor H—— having told all the men and most of all, his sweetheart! But more remains behind; for when it came to signing articles, it turned out that O——, the new first mate, had not a certificate which allowed him to have a second mate. Then came rather an affecting scene. For H—— proposed to sign as chief (he having the necessary higher certificate) but to act as second for the lower wages. At first O—— would not give in, but offered to go as second. But our brave little H—— said, no: 'The owners wished Mr. O—— to be chief mate, and chief mate he should be.' So he carried the day, signed as chief and acts as second. Shakespeare and Byron are his favorite books. I walked into Byron a little, but can well understand his stirring up a rough, young sailor's romance. I lent him *Westward Ho!* from the cabin; but to my astonishment he did not care much for it; he said it smelt of the shilling railway library; perhaps I had praised it too highly. Scott is his standard for novels. I am very happy to find good taste by no means confined to gentlemen, H—— having no pretensions to that title. He is a man after my own heart.

"Then I came down to the cabin and heard young A——'s schemes for the future. His highest picture is a commission in the Prince of Vizianagram's irregular horse. His eldest brother is tutor to his Highness's children, and grand vizier, and magistrate, and on his Highness's household staff, and seems to be one of those Scotch adventurers one meets with and hears of in queer berths—raising cavalry, building palaces, and using some petty Eastern king's long purse with their long Scotch heads.

"Off Bona: June 4.

"I read your letter carefully, leaning back in a Maltese boat to present the smallest surface of my body to a grilling sun, and sailing from the *Elba* to Cape Hamrah about three miles distant. How we fried and sighed! At last, we reached land under Fort Genova, and I was carried ashore pick-a-back, and plucked the first flower I saw for Annie. It was a strange scene, far more novel than I had imagined: the high, steep banks covered with rich, spicy vegetation of which I hardly knew one plant. The dwarf palm with fanlike leaves, growing about two feet high, formed the staple of the verdure. As we brushed through them, the gummy leaves of a cistus stuck to the clothes; and with its small white flower and yellow heart, stood for our English dog-rose. In place of heather, we had myrtle and lentisque with leaves somewhat similar.

That large bulb with long flat leaves? Do not touch it if your hands are cut; the Arabs use it as blisters for their horses. Is that the same sort? No, take that one up; it is the bulb of a dwarf palm, each layer of the onion peels off, brown and netted, like the outside of a cocoa-nut. It is a clever plant that; from the leaves we get a vegetable horsehair;—and eat the bottom of the center spike. All the leaves you pull have the same aromatic scent. But here a little patch of cleared ground shows old friends, who seem to cling by abused civilization:—fine, hardy thistles, one of them bright yellow, though;—honest, Scotch-looking, large daisies or gowans;—potatoes here and there, looking but sickly; and dark, sturdy fig-trees looking cool and at their ease in the burning sun.

"Here we are at Fort Genova, crowning the little point; a small old building, due to my old Genoese acquaintance who fought and traded bravely once upon a time. A broken cannon of theirs forms the threshold; and through a dark, low arch, we enter upon broad terraces sloping to the center, from which rain water may collect and run into that well. Large-breeched French troopers lounge about and are most civil; and the whole party sit down to breakfast in a little white-washed room, from the door of which the long, mountain coastline and the sparkling sea show of an impossible blue through the openings of a white-washed rampart. I try a sea-egg, one of those prickly fellows—sea-urchins, they are called sometimes; the shell is of a lovely purple, and when opened, there are rays of yellow adhering to the inside; these I eat, but they are very fishy.

"We are silent and shy of one another, and soon go out to watch while turbaned, bluebreeched, barelegged Arabs dig holes for the land telegraph posts on the following principle: one man takes a pick and bangs lazily at the hard earth; when a little is loosened, his mate with a small spade lifts it on one side; and *da capo*. They have regular features and look quite in place among the palms. Our English workmen screw the earthenware insulators on the posts, strain the wire, and order Arabs about by the generic term of Johnny. I find W—— has nothing for me to do; and that in fact no one has anything to do. Some instruments for testing have stuck at Lyons, some at Cagliari; and nothing can be done—or at any rate, is done. I wander about, thinking of you and staring at big, green grasshoppers—locusts, some people call them—and smelling the rich brushwood. There was nothing for a pencil to sketch, and I soon got tired of this work, though I have paid willingly much money for far less strange and lovely sights.

"Off Cape Spartivento: June 8.

"At two this morning, we left Cagliari; at five cast anchor here. I got up and began preparing for the final trial; and shortly afterward every one else of note on board went ashore to make experiments on the state of the cable, leaving me with the prospect of beginning to lift at 12 o'clock. I was not ready by that time; but the experiments were not concluded and moreover the cable was found to be imbedded some four or five feet in sand, so that the boat could not bring off the end. At three, Messrs. Liddell, etc., came on board in good spirits, having found two wires good or in such a state as permitted messages to be transmitted freely. The boat now went to grapple for the cable some way from shore while the *Elba* towed a small lateen craft which was to take back the consul to Cagliari some distance on its way. On our return we found the boat had been unsuccessful; she was allowed to drop astern, while we grappled for the cable in the *Elba* [without more success]. The coast is a low mountain range covered with brushwood or heather—pools of water and a sandy beach at their feet. I have not yet been ashore, my hands having been very full all day.

"June 9.

"Grappling for the cable outside the bank had been voted too uncertain; [and the day was spent in] efforts to pull the cable off through the sand which has accumulated over it. By getting the cable tight on to the boat, and letting the swell pitch her about till it got slack, and then tightening again with blocks and pulleys, we managed to get out from the beach toward the ship at the rate of about twenty yards an hour. When they had got about 100 yards from shore, we ran round in the *Elba* to try and help them, letting go the anchor in the shallowest possible water; this was about sunset. Suddenly some one calls out he sees the cable at the bottom: there it was sure enough, apparently wriggling about as the waves rippled. Great excitement; still greater when we find our own anchor is foul of it and has been the means of bringing it to light. We let go a grapnel, get the cable clear of the anchor on to the grapnel—the captain in an agony lest we should drift ashore meanwhile—hand the grappling line into the big boat, steam out far enough, and anchor again. A little more work and one end of the cable is up over the bows round my drum. I go to my engine and we start hauling in. All goes pretty well, but it is quite dark. Lamps are got at last, and men arranged. We go on for a quarter of a mile or so from shore and then stop at about half-past nine with orders to be up at three. Grand work at last! A number of the *Saturday Review* here; it reads so hot and feverish, so tomblike and unhealthy, in the midst of dear Nature's hills and sea, with good wholesome work to do. Pray that all go well to-morrow.

"June 10.

"Thank heaven for a most fortunate day. At three o'clock this morning in a damp, chill mist all hands were roused to work. With a small delay, for one or two improvements I had seen to be necessary last night, the engine started and since that time I do not think there has been half an hour's stoppage. A rope to splice, a block to change, a wheel to oil, an old rusted anchor to disengage from the cable which brought it up, these have been our only obstructions. Sixty, seventy, eighty, a hundred, a hundred and twenty revolutions at last, my little engine tears away. The even black rope comes straight out of the blue heaving water; passes slowly round an open-hearted, good-tempered looking pulley, five feet diameter; aft past a vicious nipper, to bring all up should anything go wrong; through a gentle guide; on to a huge bluff drum, who wraps him round his body and says 'Come you must,' as plain as drum can speak: the chattering pauls say 'I've got him, I've got him, he can't get back': while black cable, much slacker and easier in mind and body, is taken by a slim V-pulley and passed down into the huge hold, where half a dozen men put him comfortably to bed after his exertion in rising from his long bath. In good sooth, it is one of the strangest sights I know to see that black fellow rising up so steadily in the midst of the blue sea. We are more than half way to the place where we expect the fault; and already the one wire, supposed previously to be quite bad near the African coast, can be spoken through. I am very glad I am here, for my machines are my own children and I look on their little failings with a parent's eye and lead them into the path of duty with gentleness and firmness. I am naturally in good spirits, but keep very quiet, for misfortunes may arise at any instant; moreover to-morrow my paying-out apparatus will be wanted should all go well, and that will be another nervous operation. Fifteen miles are safely in; but no one knows better than I do that nothing is done till all is done.

"June 11.

"9 A. M.—We have reached the splice supposed to be faulty, and no fault has been found. The two men learned in electricity, L—— and W——, squabble where the fault is.

"*Evening.*—A weary day in a hot broiling sun; no air. After the experiments, L—— said the fault might be ten miles ahead; by that time, we should be according to a chart in about a thousand fathoms of water—rather more than a mile. It was most difficult to decide whether to go on or not. I made preparations for a heavy pull, set small things to rights and went to sleep. About four in the afternoon, Mr. Liddell decided to proceed, and we are now (at seven) grinding it in at the rate of a mile and three-quarters per hour, which appears a grand speed to us. If the paying-out only works well! I have just thought of a great improvement in it; I can't apply it this time, however.—The sea is of an oily calm, and a perfect fleet of brigs and ships surrounds us, their sails hardly filling in the lazy breeze. The sun sets behind the dim coast of the Isola San Pietro, the coast of Sardinia high and rugged becomes softer and softer in the distance, while to the westward still the isolated rock of Toro springs from the horizon.—It would amuse you to see how cool (in head) and jolly everybody is. A testy word now and then shows the wires are strained a little, but every one laughs and makes his little jokes as if it were all in fun: yet we are all as much in earnest as the most earnest of the earnest bastard German school or demonstrative of Frenchmen. I enjoy it very much.

"June 12.

"5.30 A. M.—Out of sight of land: about thirty nautical miles in the hold; the wind rising a little; experiments being made for a fault, while the engine slowly revolves to keep us hanging at the same spot: depth supposed about a mile. The machinery has behaved admirably. Oh! that the paying-out were over! The new machinery there is but rough, meant for an experiment in shallow water, and here we are in a mile of water.

"6.30.—I have made my calculations and find the new paying-out gear can not possibly answer at this depth, some portion would give way. Luckily, I have brought the old things with me and am getting them rigged up as fast as may be. Bad news from the cable. Number four has given in some portion of the last ten miles: the fault in number three is still at the bottom of the sea: number two is now the only good wire; and the hold is getting in such a mess, through keeping bad bits out and cutting for splicing and testing, that there will be great risk in paying out. The cable is somewhat strained in its ascent from one mile below us; what it will be when we get to two miles is a problem we may have to determine.

"9 P. M.—A most provoking unsatisfactory day. We have done nothing. The wind and sea have both risen. Too little notice has been given to the telegraphists who accompany this expedition; they had to leave all their instruments at Lyons in order to arrive at Bona in time; our tests are therefore of the roughest, and no one really knows where the faults are. Mr. L—— in the morning lost much time; then he told us, after we had been inactive for about eight hours, that the fault in number three was within six miles; and at six o'clock in the evening, when all was ready for a start to pick up these six miles, he comes and says there must be a fault about thirty miles from Bona! By this time it was too late to begin paying out to-day, and we must lie here moored in a thousand fathoms till light to-morrow morning. The ship pitches a good deal, but the wind is going down.

"June 13, Sunday.

"The wind has not gone down, however. It now (at 10.30) blows a pretty stiff gale, the sea has also risen; and the *Elba's* bows rise and fall about 9 feet. We make twelve pitches to the minute, and the poor cable must feel very seasick by this time. We are quite unable to do anything, and continue riding at anchor in one thousand fathoms, the engines going constantly so as to keep the ship's bows up to the cable, which by this means hangs nearly vertical and sustains no strain but that caused by its own weight and the pitching of the vessel. We were all up at four, but the weather entirely forbade work for to-day, so some went to bed and most lay down, making up our leeway, as we nautically term our loss of sleep. I must say Liddell is a fine fellow and keeps his patience and temper wonderfully; and yet how he does fret and fume about trifles at home! This wind has blown now for 36 hours, and yet we have telegrams from Bona to say the sea there is as calm as a mirror. It makes one laugh to remember one is still tied to the shore. Click, click, click, the pecker is at work: I wonder what Herr P—— says to Herr L——, —tests, tests, tests, nothing more. This will be a very anxious day.

"June 14.

"Another day of fatal inaction.

"June 15.

"9.30.—The wind has gone down a deal; but even now there are doubts whether we shall start to-day. When shall I get back to you?

"9 P. M.—Four miles from land. Our run has been successful and eventless. Now the work is nearly over I feel a little out of spirits—why, I should be puzzled to say—mere wantonness, or reaction perhaps after suspense.

"June 16.

"Up this morning at three, coupled my self-acting gear to the brake and had the satisfaction of seeing it pay out the last four miles in very good style. With one or two little improvements, I hope to make it a capital thing. The end has just gone ashore in two boats, three out of four wires good. Thus ends our first expedition. By some odd chance a *Times* of June the 7th has found its way on board through the agency of a wretched old peasant who watches the end of the line here. A long account of breakages in the Atlantic trial trip. To-night we grapple for the heavy cable, eight tons to the mile. I long to have a tug at him; he may puzzle me, and though misfortunes or rather difficulties are a bore at the time, life when working with cables is tame without them.

"2 P. M.—Hurrah, he is hooked, the big fellew, almost at the first cast. He hangs under our bows looking so huge and imposing that I could find it in my heart to be afraid of him.

"June 17.

"We went to a little bay called Chia, where a fresh-water stream falls into the sea, and took in water. This is rather a long operation, so I went a walk up the valley with Mr. Liddell. The coast here consists of rocky mountains 800 to 1,000 feet high covered with shrubs of a brilliant green. On landing our first amusement was watching the hundreds of large fish who lazily swam in shoals about the river; the big canes on the further side hold numberless tortoises, we are told, but see none, for just now they prefer taking a siesta. A little further on, and what is this with large pink flowers in such abundance?—the oleander in full flower. At first I fear to pluck them, thinking they must be cultivated and valuable; but soon the banks show a long line of thick, tall shrubs, one mass of glorious pink and green. Set these in a little valley, framed by mountains whose rocks gleam out blue and purple colors such as pre-Raphaelites only dare attempt, shining out hard and weird-like among the clumps of castor-oil plants, cistus, arbor vitæ and many other evergreens, whose names, alas! I know not; the cistus is brown now, the rest all deep or brilliant green. Large herds of cattle browse on the baked deposit at the foot of these large crags. One or two half-savage herdsmen in sheepskin kilt, etc., ask for cigars; partridges whirr up on either side of us; pigeons coo and nightingales sing among the blooming oleander. We get six sheep and many fowls, too, from the priest of the small village; and then run back to Spartivento and make preparations for the morning.

"June 18.

"The big cable is stubborn and will not behave like his smaller brother. The gear employed to take him off the drum is not strong enough; he gets slack on the drum and plays the mischief. Luckily for my own conscience, the gear I had wanted was negatived by Mr. Newall. Mr. Liddell does not exactly blame me, but he says we might have had a silver pulley cheaper than the cost of this delay. He has telegraphed for more men to Cagliari, to try to pull the cable off the drum into the hold, by hand. I look as comfortable as I can, but feel as if people were blaming me. I am trying my best to get something rigged which may help us; I wanted a little difficulty, and feel much better.—The short length we have picked up was covered at places with beautiful sprays of coral, twisted and twined with shells of those small, fairy animals we saw in the aquarium at home; poor little things, they died at once, with their little bells and delicate bright tints.

"12 *o'clock.*—Hurrah, victory! for the present anyhow. Whilst in our first dejection, I thought I saw a place where a flat roller would remedy the whole misfortune; but a flat roller at Cape Spartivento, hard, easily unshipped, running freely! There was a grooved pulley used for the paying-out machinery with a spindle wheel, which might suit me. I filled him up with tarry spunyarn, nailed sheet copper round him, bent some parts in the fire; and we are paying-in without more trouble now. You would think some one would praise me; no, no more praise than blame before; perhaps now they think better of me, though.

"10 P. M.—We have gone on very comfortably for nearly six miles. An hour and a half was spent washing down; for along with many colored polypi, from corals, shells and insects, the big cable brings up much mud and rust, and makes a fishy smell by no means pleasant: the bottom seems to teem with life.—But now we are startled by a most unpleasant, grinding noise; which appeared at first to come from the large low pulley, but when the engines stopped, the noise continued; and we now imagine it is something slipping down the cable, and the pulley but acts as sounding-board to the big fiddle. Whether it is only an anchor or one of the two other cables, we know not. We hope it is not the cable just laid down.

"June 19.

"10 A. M.—All our alarm groundless, it would appear: the odd noise ceased after a time, and there was no mark sufficiently strong on the large cable to warrant the suspicion that we had cut another line through. I stopped up on the look-out till three in the morning, which made 23 hours between sleep and sleep. One goes dozing about, though, most of the day, for it is only when something goes wrong that one has to look alive. Hour after hour, I stand on the forecastle-head, picking off little specimens of polypi and coral, or lie on the saloon deck reading back numbers of the *Times*—till something hitches, and then all is hurly-burly once more. There are awnings all along the ship, and a most ancient, fish-like smell beneath.

"1 *o'clock*.—Suddenly a great strain in only 95 fathoms of water—belts surging and general dismay; grapnels being thrown out in the hope of finding what holds the cable. —Should it prove the young cable! We are apparently crossing its path—not the working one, but the lost child; Mr. Liddell *would* start the big one first though it was laid first: he wanted to see the job done, and meant to leave us to the small one unaided by his presence.

"3.30.—Grapnel caught something, lost it again; it left its marks on the prongs. Started lifting gear again; and after hauling in some 50 fathoms—grunt, grunt, grunt—we hear the other cable slipping down our big one, playing the selfsame tune we heard last night—louder, however.

"10 P. M.—The pull on the deck engines became harder and harder. I got steam up in a boiler on deck, and another little engine starts hauling at the grapnel. I wonder if there ever was such a scene of confusion: Mr. Liddell and W—— and the captain all giving orders contradictory, &c., on the forecastle; D——, the foreman of our men, the mates, &c., following the example of our superiors; the ship's engine and boilers below, a 50-horse engine on deck, a boiler 14 feet long on deck beside it, a little steam winch tearing round; a dozen Italians (20 have come to relieve our hands, the men we telegraphed for to Cagliari) hauling at the rope; wiremen, sailors, in the crevices left by the ropes and machinery; everything that could swear swearing—I found myself swearing like a trooper at last. We got the unknown difficulty within ten fathoms of the surface; but then the forecastle got frightened that, if it was the small cable which we had got hold of, we should certainly break it by continuing the tremendous and increasing strain. So at last Mr. Liddell decided to stop; cut the big cable, buoying its end; go back to our pleasant water-place at Chia, take more water and start lifting the small cable. The end of the large one has even now regained its sandy bed; and three buoys—one to grapnel foul of the supposed small cable, two to the big cable—are dipping about on the surface. One more—a flag-buoy—will soon follow, and then straight for shore.

"June 20.

"It is an ill-wind, &c. I have an unexpected opportunity of forwarding this engineering letter; for the craft which brought out our Italian sailors must return to Cagliari to-night, as the little cable will take us nearly to Galita, and the Italian skipper could hardly find his way from thence.

"To-day—Sunday—not much rest. Mr. Liddell is at Spartivento telegraphing. We are at Chia, and shall shortly go to help our boat's crew in getting the small cable on board. We dropped them some time since in order that they might dig it out of the sand as far as possible.

"June 21.

"Yesterday—Sunday as it was—all hands were kept at work all day, coaling, watering, and making a futile attempt to pull the cable from the shore on board through the sand. This attempt was rather silly after the experience we had gained at Cape Spartivento. This morning we grappled, hooked the cable at once, and have made an excellent start. Though I have called this the small cable, it is much larger than the Bona one.—Here comes a break down and a bad one.

"June 22.

"We got over it, however; but it is a warning to me that my future difficulties will arise from parts wearing out. Yesterday the cable was often a lovely sight, coming out of the water one large incrustation of delicate, net-like corals and long, white curling shells. No portion of the dirty black wires was visible; instead we had a garland of soft pink with little scarlet sprays and white enamel intermixed. All was fragile, however, and could hardly be secured in safety; and inexorable iron crushed the tender leaves to atoms.—This morning at the end of my watch, about 4 o'clock, we came to the buoys, proving our anticipations right concerning the crossing of the cables. I went to bed for four hours, and on getting up, found a sad mess. A tangle of the six-wire cable hung to the grapnel which had been left buoyed, and the small cable had parted and is lost for the present. Our hauling of the other day must have done the mischief.

"June 23.

"We contrived to get the two ends of the large cable and to pick the short end up. The long end, leading us seaward, was next put round the drum and a mile of it picked up; but then, fearing another tangle, the end was cut and buoyed, and we returned to grapple for the three-wire cable. All this is very tiresome for me. The buoying and dredging are managed entirely by W——, who has had much experience in this sort of thing; so I have not enough to do and get very homesick. At noon the wind freshened and the sea rose so high that we had to run for land and are once more this evening anchored at Chia.

"June 24.

"The whole day spent in dredging without success. This operation consists in allowing the ship to drift slowly across the line where you expect the cable to be, while at the end of a long rope, fast either to the bow or stern, a grapnel drags along the ground. This grapnel is a small anchor, made like four pot-hooks tied back to back. When the rope gets taut, the ship is stopped and the grapnel hauled up to the surface in the hopes of finding the cable on its prongs.—I am much discontented with myself for idly lounging about and reading *Westward Ho* for the second time, instead of taking to electricity or picking up nautical information. I am uncommonly idle. The sea is not quite so rough, but the weather is squally and the rain comes in frequent gusts.

"June 25.

"To-day about 1 o'clock we hooked the three-wire cable, buoyed the long sea end, and picked up the short [or shore] end. Now it is dark and we must wait for morning before lifting the buoy we lowered to-day and proceeding seawards.—The depth of water here is about 600 feet, the height of a respectable English hill; our fishing line was about a quarter of a mile long. It blows pretty fresh, and there is a great deal of sea.

"26th.

"This morning it came on to blow so heavily that it was impossible to take up our buoy. The *Elba* recommenced rolling in true Baltic style and towards noon we ran for land.

"27th, Sunday.

"This morning was a beautiful calm. We reached the buoys at about 4.30 and commenced picking up at 6.30. Shortly a new cause of anxiety arose. Kinks came up in great quantities, about thirty in the hour. To have a true conception of a kink, you must see one: it is a loop drawn tight, all the wires get twisted and the gutta-percha inside pushed out. These much diminish the value of the cable, as they must all be cut out, the gutta-percha made good, and the cable spliced. They arise from the cable having been badly laid down so that it forms folds and tails at the bottom of the sea. These kinks have another disadvantage: they weaken the cable very much.—At about six o'clock [P. M.] we had some twelve miles lifted, when I went to the bows; the kinks were exceedingly tight and were giving way in a most alarming manner. I got a cage rigged up to prevent the end (if it broke) from hurting anyone, and sat down on the bowsprit, thinking I should describe kinks to Annie:—suddenly I saw a great many coils and kinks altogether at the surface. I jumped to the gutta-percha pipe, by blowing through which the signal is given to stop the engine. I blow, but the engine does not stop; again—no answer: the coils and kinks jam in the bows and I rush aft shouting stop! Too late: the cable had parted and must lie in peace at the bottom. Someone had pulled the gutta-percha tube across a bare part of the steam pipe and melted it. It had been used hundreds of times in the last few days and gave no symptoms of failing. I believe the cable must have gone at any rate; however, since it went in my watch and since I might have secured the tubing more strongly, I feel rather sad. . . .

"June 28.

"Since I could not go to Annie I took down Shakespeare, and by the time I had finished *Antony and Cleopatra,* read the second half of *Troilus* and got some way in *Coriolanus,* I felt it was childish to regret the accident had happened in my watch, and moreover I felt myself not much to blame in the tubing matter—it had been torn down, it had not fallen down; so I went to bed, and slept without fretting, and woke this morning in the same good mood—for which thank you and our friend Shakespeare. I am happy to say Mr. Liddell said the loss of the cable did not much matter; though this would have been no consolation had I felt myself to blame.—This morning we have grappled for and found another length of small cable which Mr. —— dropped in 100 fathoms of water. If this also gets full of kinks, we shall probably have to cut it after 10 miles or so, or more probably still it will part of its own free will or weight.

"10 P. M.—This second length of three-wire cable soon got into the same condition as its fellow—i. e. came up twenty kinks an hour—and after seven miles were in, parted on the pulley over the bows at one of the said kinks, during my watch again, but this time no earthly power could have saved it. I had taken all manner of precautions to prevent the end doing any damage when the smash came, for come I knew it must. We now return to the six-wire cable. As I sat watching the cable to-night, large phosphorescent globes kept rolling from it and fading in the black water.

"29th.

"To-day we returned to the buoy we had left at the end of the six-wire cable, and after much trouble from a series of tangles, got a fair start at noon. You will easily believe a tangle of iron rope inch and a half diameter is not easy to unravel, especially with a ton or so hanging to the ends. It is now eight o'clock and we have about six and a half miles safe: it becomes very exciting, however, for the kinks are coming fast and furious.

"July 2.

"Twenty-eight miles safe in the hold. The ship is now so deep, that the men are to be turned out of their aft hold, and the remainder coiled there; so the good *Elba's* nose need not burrow too far into the waves. There can only be about 10 or 12 miles more, but these weigh 80 or 100 tons.

"July 5.

"Our first mate was much hurt in securing a buoy on the evening of the 2nd. As interpreter [with the Italians] I am useful in all these cases; but for no fortune would I be a doctor to witness these scenes continually. Pain is a terrible thing.—Our work is done: the whole of the six-wire cable has been recovered; only a small part of the three-wire, but that wire was bad and, owing to its twisted state, the value small. We may therefore be said to have been very successful."

II

I have given this cruise nearly in full. From the notes, unhappily imperfect, of two others, I will take only specimens; for in all there are features of similarity and it is possible to have too much even of submarine telegraphy and the romance of engineering. And first from the cruise of 1859 in the Greek Islands and to Alexandria, take a few traits, incidents and pictures.

"May 10, 1859.

"We had a fair wind and we did very well, seeing a little bit of Cerig or Cythera, and lots of turtle-doves wandering about over the sea and perching, tired and timid, in the rigging of our little craft. Then Falconera, Antimilo, and Milo, topped with huge white clouds, barren, deserted, rising bold and mysterious from the blue, chafing sea;—Argentiera, Siphano, Scapho, Paros, Antiparos, and late at night Syra itself. *Adam Bede* in one hand, a sketch-book in the other, lying on rugs under an awning, I enjoyed a very pleasant day.

"May 14.

"Syra is semi-eastern. The pavement, huge shapeless blocks sloping to a central gutter; from this bare two-storied houses, sometimes plaster many colored, sometimes rough-hewn marble, rise, dirty and ill-finished to straight, plain, flat roofs; shops guiltless of windows, with signs in Greek letters; dogs, Greeks in blue, baggy, Zouave breeches and a fez, a few narghiles and a sprinkling of the ordinary continental shopboys.—In the evening I tried one more walk in Syra with A——, but in vain endeavored to amuse myself or to spend money; the first effort resulting in singing *Doodah* to a passing Greek or two, the second in spending, no, in making A—— spend, threepence on coffee for three.

"May 16.

"On coming on deck, I found we were at anchor in Canea bay, and saw one of the most lovely sights man could witness. Far on either hand stretch bold mountain caps, Spada and Maleka, tender in color, bold in outline; rich sunny levels lie beneath them, framed by the azure sea. Right in front, a dark brown fortress girdles white mosques and minarets. Rich and green, our mountain caps here join to form a setting for the town, in whose dark walls—still darker—open a dozen high-arched caves in which the huge Venetian galleys used to lie in wait. High above all, higher and higher yet, up into the firmament, range after range of blue and snow-capped mountains. I was bewildered and amazed, having heard nothing of this great beauty. The town when entered is quite eastern. The streets are formed of open stalls under the first story, in which squat tailors, cooks, sherbet venders and the like, busy at their work or smoking narghiles. Cloths stretched from house to house keep out the sun. Mules rattle through the crowd; curs yelp between your legs; negroes are as hideous and bright-clothed as usual; grave Turks with long chibouks continue to march solemnly without breaking them; a little Arab in one dirty rag pokes fun at two splendid little Turks with brilliant fezzes; wiry mountaineers in dirty, full, white kilts, shouldering long guns and one hand on their pistols, stalk untamed past a dozen Turkish soldiers, who look sheepish and brutal in worn cloth jacket and cotton trousers. A headless, wingless lion of St. Mark still stands upon a gate, and has left the mark of his strong clutch. Of ancient times when Crete was Crete, not a trace remains; save perhaps in the full, well-cut nostril and firm tread of that mountaineer, and I suspect that even his sires were Albanians, mere outer barbarians.

"May 17.

"I spent the day at the little station where the cable was landed, which has apparently been first a Venetian monastery and then a Turkish mosque. At any rate the big dome is very cool, and the little ones hold [our electric] batteries capitally. A handsome young Bashibazouk guards it, and a still handsomer mountaineer is the servant; so I draw them and the monastery and the hill, till I'm black in the face with heat and come on board to hear the Canea cable is still bad.

"May 23.

"We arrived in the morning at the east end of Candia, and had a glorious scramble over the mountains which seem built of adamant. Time has worn away the softer portions of the rock, only leaving sharp jagged edges of steel. Sea eagles soaring above our heads; old tanks, ruins, and desolation at our feet. The ancient Arsinoe stood here; a few blocks of marble with the cross attest the presence of Venetian Christians; but now—the desolation of desolations. Mr. Liddell and I separated from the rest, and when we had found a sure bay for the cable, had a tremendous lively scramble back to the boat. These are the bits of our life which I enjoy, which have some poetry, some grandeur in them.

"May 29 (?).

"Yesterday we ran round to the new harbor [of Alexandria], landed the shore end of the cable close to Cleopatra's bath, and made a very satisfactory start about one in the afternoon. We had scarcely gone 200 yards when I noticed that the cable ceased to run out, and I wondered why the ship had stopped. People ran aft to tell me not to put such a strain on the cable; I answered indignantly that there was no strain; and suddenly it broke on every one in the ship at once that we were aground. Here was a nice mess. A violent sirocco blew from the land; making one's skin feel as if it belonged to some one else and didn't fit, making the horizon dim and yellow with fine sand, oppressing every sense and raising the thermometer 20 degrees in an hour, but making calm water round us which enabled the ship to lie for the time in safety. The wind might change at any moment, since the sirocco was only accidental; and at the first wave from seaward bump would go the poor ship, and there would [might] be an end of our voyage. The captain, without waiting to sound, began to make an effort to put the ship over what was supposed to be a sandbank; but by the time soundings were made, this was found to be impossible, and he had only been jamming the poor *Elba* faster on a rock. Now every effort was made to get her astern, an anchor taken out, a rope brought to a winch I had for the cable, and the engines backed; but all in vain. A small Turkish Government steamer, which is to be our consort, came to our assistance, but of course very slowly, and much time was occupied before we could get a hawser to her. I could do no good after having made a chart of the soundings round the ship, and went at last on to the bridge to sketch the scene. But at that moment the strain from the winch and a jerk from the Turkish steamer got off the boat, after we had been some hours aground. The carpenter reported that she had made only two inches of water in one compartment; the cable was still uninjured astern, and our spirits rose; when, will you believe it? after going a short distance astern, the pilot ran us once more fast aground on what seemed to me nearly the same spot. The very same scene was gone through as on the first occasion, and dark came on while the wind shifted, and we were still aground. Dinner was served up, but poor Mr. Liddell could eat very little; and bump, bump, grind, grind, went the ship fifteen or sixteen times as we sat at dinner. The slight sea, however, did enable us to bump off. This morning we appear not to have suffered in any way; but a sea is rolling in, which a few hours ago would have settled the poor old *Elba.*

"June —.

"The Alexandria cable has again failed; after paying out two-thirds of the distance successfully, an unlucky touch in deep water snapped the line. Luckily the accident occurred in Mr. Liddell's watch. Though personally it may not really concern me, the accident weighs like a personal misfortune. Still I am glad I was present; a failure is probably more instructive than a success; and this experience may enable us to avoid misfortune in still greater undertakings.

"June —.

"We left Syra the morning after our arrival on Saturday the 4th. This we did (first) because we were in a hurry to do something and (second) because, coming from Alexandria, we had four days' quarantine to perform. We were all mustered along the side while the doctor counted us; the letters were popped into a little tin box and taken away to be smoked; the guardians put on board to see that we held no communication with the shore —without them we should still have had four more days' quarantine; and with twelve Greek sailors besides, we started merrily enough picking up the Canea cable. . . . To our utter dismay, the yarn covering began to come up quite decayed, and the cable, which when laid should have borne half a ton, was now in danger of snapping with a tenth part of that strain. We went as slow as possible in fear of a break at every instant. My watch was from eight to twelve in the morning, and during that time we had barely secured three miles of cable. Once it broke inside the ship, but I seized hold of it in time—the weight being hardly anything—and the line for the nonce was saved. Regular nooses were then planted inboard with men to draw them taut, should the cable break inboard. A——, who should have relieved me, was unwell, so I had to continue my look-out; and about one o'clock the line again parted, but was again caught in the last noose, with about four inches to spare. Five minutes afterward it again parted and was yet once more caught. Mr. Liddell (whom I had called) could stand this no longer; so we buoyed the line and ran into a bay in Siphano, waiting for calm weather, though I was by no means of opinion that the slight sea and wind had been the cause of our failures.

"All next day (Monday) we lay off Siphano, amusing ourselves on shore with fowling-pieces and navy revolvers. I need not say we killed nothing; and luckily we did not wound any of ourselves. A guardian accompanied us, his functions being limited to preventing actual contact with the natives, for they might come as near and talk as much as they pleased. These isles of Greece are sad, interesting places. They are not really barren all over, but they are quite destitute of verdure; and tufts of thyme, wild mastic or mint, though they sound well, are not nearly so pretty as grass. Many little churches, glittering white, dot the islands; most of them, I believe, abandoned during the whole year with the exception of one day sacred to their patron saint. The villages are mean, but the inhabitants do not look wretched and the men are good sailors. There is something in this Greek race yet; they will become a powerful Levantine nation in the course of time.—What a lovely moonlight evening that was! the barren island cutting the clear sky with fantastic outline, marble cliffs on either hand fairly gleaming over the calm sea. Next day, the wind still continuing, I proposed a boating excursion and decoyed A——, L——, and S—— into accompanying me.

"We took the little gig, and sailed away merrily enough round a point to a beautiful white bay, flanked with two glistening little churches, fronted by beautiful distant islands; when suddenly, to my horror, I discovered the *Elba* steaming full speed out from the island. Of course we steered after her; but the wind that instant ceased, and we were left in a dead calm. There was nothing for it but to unship the mast, get out the oars and pull. The ship was nearly certain to stop at the buoy; and I wanted to learn how to take an car, so here was a chance with a vengeance! L—— steered, and we three pulled—a broiling pull it was about half way across to Palikandro—still we did come in, pulling an uncommon good stroke, and I had learned to hang on my oar. L—— had pressed me to let him take my place; but though I was very tired at the end of the first quarter of an hour, and then every successive half hour, I would not give in. I nearly paid dear for my obstinacy, however; for in the evening I had alternate fits of shivering and burning."

III

The next extracts, and I am sorry to say the last, are from Fleeming's letters of 1860, when he was back at Bona and Spartivento and for the first time at the head of an expedition. Unhappily these letters are only the last, but the series is quite imperfect; and this is the more to be lamented as he had now begun to use a pen more skilfully, and in the following notes there is at times a touch of real distinction in the manner.

"Çagliari: October 5, 1860.

"All Tuesday I spent examining what was on board the *Elba,* and trying to start the repairs of the Spartivento land line, which has been entirely neglected, and no wonder, for no one has been paid for three months, no, not even the poor guards who have to keep themselves, their horses and their families, on their pay. Wednesday morning, I started for Spartivento and got there in time to try a good many experiments. Spartivento looks more wild and savage than ever, but is not without a strange deadly beauty: the hills covered with bushes of a metallic green with coppery patches of soil in between; the valleys filled with dry salt mud and a little stagnant water; where that very morning the deer had drunk, where herons, curlews, and other fowl abound, and where, alas! malaria is breeding with this rain. (No fear for those who do not sleep on shore.) A little iron hut had been placed there since 1858; but the windows had been carried off, the door broken down, the roof pierced all over. In it, we sat to make experiments; and how it recalled Birkenhead! There was Thomson, there was my testing board, the strings of gutta-percha; Harry P—— even, battering with the batteries; but where was my darling Annie? While I sat feet in sand, with Harry alone inside the hut—mats, coats, and wood to darken the window—the others visited the murderous old friar, who is of the order of Scaloppi, and for whom I brought a letter from his superior, ordering him to pay us attention; but he was away from home, gone to Cagliari in a boat with the produce of the farm belonging to his convent. Then they visited the tower of Chia, but could not get in because the door is thirty feet off the ground; so they came back and pitched a magnificent tent which I brought from the *Bahiana* a long time ago—and where they will live (if I mistake not) in preference to the friar's, or the owl and bat haunted tower. MM. T—— and S—— will be left there: T——, an intelligent, hard-working Frenchman, with whom I am well pleased; he can speak English and Italian well, and has been two years at Genoa. S—— is a French German with a face like an ancient Gaul, who has been sergeant-major in the French line and who is, I see, a great, big, muscular *fainéant.* We left the tent pitched and some stores in charge of a guide, and ran back to Cagliari.

"Certainly, being at the head of things is pleasanter than being subordinate. We all agree very well; and I have made the testing office into a kind of private room where I can come and write to you undisturbed, surrounded by my dear, bright brass things which all of them remind me of our nights at Birkenhead. Then I can work here, too, and try lots of experiments; you know how I like that! and now and then I read—Shakespeare principally. Thank you so much for making me bring him: I think I must get a pocket edition of *Hamlet* and *Henry the Fifth,* so as never to be without them.

"Cagliari: October 7.

"[The town was full?] . . . of red-shirted English Garibaldini. A very fine looking set of fellows they are, too: the officers rather raffish, but with medals Crimean and Indian; the men a very sturdy set, with many lads of good birth I should say. They still wait their consort the *Emperor* and will, I fear, be too late to do anything. I meant to have called on them, but they are all gone into barracks some way from the town, and I have been much too busy to go far.

"The view from the ramparts was very strange and beautiful. Cagliari rises on a very steep rock, at the mouth of a wide plain circled by large hills and three-quarters filled with lagoons; it looks, therefore, like an old island citadel. Large heaps of salt mark the border between the sea and the lagoons; thousands of flamingoes whiten the center of the huge shallow marsh; hawks hover and scream among the trees under the high moldering battlements.—A little lower down, the band played. Men and ladies bowed and pranced, the costumes posed, church bells tinkled, processions processed, the sun set behind thick clouds capping the hills; I pondered on you and enjoyed it all.

"Decidedly I prefer being master to being man: boats at all hours, stewards flying for marmalade, captain enquiring when ship is to sail, clerks to copy my writing, the boat to steer when we go out—I have run her nose on several times; decidedly, I begin to feel quite a little king. Confound the cable, though! I shall never be able to repair it.

"Bona: October 14.

"We left Cagliari at 4.30 on the 9th and soon got to Spartivento. I repeated some of my experiments, but found Thomson, who was to have been my grand stand-by, would not work on that day in the wretched little hut. Even if the windows and door had been put in, the wind which was very high made the lamp flicker about and blew it out; so I sent on board and got old sails, and fairly wrapped the hut up in them; and then we were as snug as could be, and I left the hut in glorious condition with a nice little stove in it. The tent which should have been forthcoming from the curé's for the guards, had gone to Cagliari; but I found another, [a] green, Turkish tent, in the *Elba* and soon had him up. The square tent left on the last occasion was standing all right and tight in spite of wind and rain. We landed provisions, two beds, plates, knives, forks, candles, cooking utensils, and were ready for a start at 6 P. M.; but the wind meanwhile had come on to blow at such a rate that I thought better of it, and we stopped. T—— and S—— slept ashore, however, to see how they liked it; at least they tried to sleep, for S—— the ancient sergeant-major had a toothache, and T—— thought the tent was coming down every minute. Next morning they could only complain of sand and a leaky coffee-pot, so I leave them with a good conscience. The little encampment looked quite picturesque: the green round tent, the square white tent and the hut all wrapped up in sails, on a sand hill, looking on the sea and masking those confounded marshes at the back. One would have thought the Cagliaritans were in a conspiracy to frighten the two poor fellows, who (I believe) will be safe enough if they do not go into the marshes after nightfall. S—— brought a little dog to amuse them, such a jolly, ugly little cur without a tail, but full of fun; he will be better than quinine.

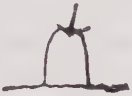
"The wind drove a bark, which had anchored near us for shelter, out to sea. We started, however, at 2 P. M., and had a quick passage but a very rough one, getting to Bona by daylight [on the 11th]. Such a place as this is for getting anything done! The health boat went away from us at 7.30 with W—— on board; and we heard nothing of them till 9.30, when W—— came back with two fat Frenchmen who are to look on on the part of the Government. They are exactly alike: only one has four bands and the other three round his cap, and so I know them. Then I sent a boat round to Fort Gênois [Fort Genova of 1858], where the cable is landed, with all sorts of things and directions, while I went ashore to see about coals and a room at the fort. We hunted people in the little square in their shops and offices, but only found them in cafés. One amiable gentleman wasn't up at 9.30, was out at 10, and as soon as he came back the servant said he would go to bed and not get up until 3; he came, however, to find us at a café, and said that, on the contrary, two days in the week he did not do so! Then my two fat friends must have their breakfast after their "something" at a café; and all the shops shut from 10 to 2; and the post does not open till 12; and there was a road to Fort Gênois, only a bridge had been carried away, etc. At last I got off, and we rowed round to Fort Gênois, where my men had put up a capital gipsy tent with sails, and there was my big board and Thomson's number 5 in great glory. I soon came to the conclusion there was a break. Two of my faithful Cagliaritans slept all night in the little tent, to guard it and my precious instruments; and the sea, which was rather rough, silenced my Frenchmen.

"Next day I went on with my experiments, while a boat grappled for the cable a little way from shore and buoyed it where the *Elba* could get hold. I brought all back to the *Elba*, tried my machinery and was all ready for a start next morning. But the wretched coal had not come yet; Government permission from Algiers to be got; lighters, men, baskets, and I know not what forms to be got or got through—and everybody asleep! Coals or no coals, I was determined to start next morning; and start we did at four in the morning, picked up the buoy with our deck engine, popped the cable across a boat, tested the wires to make sure the fault was not behind us, and started picking up at 11. Everything worked admirably, and about 2 P. M., in came the fault. There is no doubt the cable was broken by coral fishers; twice they have had it up to their own knowledge.

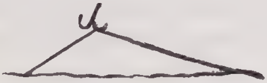
"Many men have been ashore to-day and have come back tipsy, and the whole ship is in a state of quarrel from top to bottom, and they will gossip just within my hearing. And we have had, moreover, three French gentlemen and a French lady to dinner, and I had to act host and try to manage the mixtures to their taste. The good-natured little French woman was most amusing; when I asked her if she would have some apple tart—*'Mon Dieu,'* with heroic resignation, *'je veux bien'*; or a little *plombodding* —*'Mais ce que vous voudrez, Monsieur!'*

"S.S. *Elba*, somewhere not far from Bona: Oct. 19.

"Yesterday [after three previous days of useless grappling] was destined to be very eventful. We began dredging at daybreak and hooked at once every time in rocks; but by capital luck, just as we were deciding it was no use to continue in that place, we hooked the cable: up it came, was tested, and lo! another complete break, a quarter of a mile off. I was amazed at my own tranquillity under these disappointments, but I was not really half so fussy as about getting a cab. Well, there was nothing for it but grappling again, and, as you may imagine, we were getting about six miles from shore. But the water did not deepen rapidly; we seemed to be on the crest of a kind of submarine mountain in prolongation of Cape de Gonde, and pretty havoc we must have made with the crags. What rocks we did hook! No sooner was the grapnel down than the ship was anchored; and then came such a business: the ship's engines going, deck engine thundering, belt slipping, fear of breaking ropes: actually breaking grapnels. It was always an hour or more before we could get the grapnel down again. At last we had to give up the place, though we knew we were close to the cable, and go further to sea in much deeper water; to my great fear, as I knew the cable was much eaten away and would stand but little strain. Well, we hooked the cable the first dredge this time, and pulled it slowly and gently to the top, with much trepidation. Was it the cable? was there any weight on? it was evidently too small. Imagine my dismay when the cable did come up, but hanging loosely, thus



instead of taut, thus



showing certain signs of a break close by. For a moment I felt provoked, as I thought, 'Here we are in deep water, and the cable will not stand lifting!' I tested at once, and by the very first wire found it had broken toward shore and was good toward sea. This was of course very pleasant; but from that time to this, though the wires test very well, not a signal has come from Spartivento. I got the cable into a boat, and we signaled away at a great rate —but no signs of life. The tests, however, make me pretty sure one wire at least is good; so I determined to lay down cable from where we were to the shore, and go to Spartivento to see what had happened there. I fear my men are ill. The night was lovely, perfectly calm; so we lay close to the boat and signals were continually sent, but with no result. This morning I laid the cable down to Fort Gênois in style; and now we are picking up odds and ends of cable between the different breaks, and getting our buoys on board, etc. To-morrow I expect to leave for Spartivento."

IV

And now I am quite at an end of journal keeping; diaries and diary letters being things of youth which Fleeming had at length outgrown. But one or two more fragments from his correspondence may be taken, and first his brief sketch of the laying of the Norderney cable; mainly interesting as showing under what defects of strength and in what extremities of pain, this cheerful man must at times continue to go about his work.

"I slept on board 29th September, having arranged everything to start by daybreak from where we lay in the roads; but at daybreak a heavy mist hung over us so that nothing of land or water could be seen. At midday it lifted suddenly and away we went with perfect weather, but could not find the buoys Forde left, that evening. I saw the captain was not strong in navigation, and took matters next day much more into my own hands and before nine o'clock found the buoys; (the weather had been so fine we had anchored in the open sea near Texel.) It took us till the evening to reach the buoys, get the cable on board, test the first half, speak to Lowestoft, make the splice, and start. H—— had not finished his work at Norderney, so I was alone on board for Reuter. Moreover the buoys to guide us in our course were not placed, and the captain had very vague ideas about keeping his course; so I had to do a good deal, and only lay down as I was for two hours in the night. I managed to run the course perfectly. Everything went well, and we found Norderney just where we wanted it next afternoon, and if the shore end had been laid, could have finished there and then, October 1st. But when we got to Norderney, we found the *Caroline* with shore end lying apparently aground, and could not understand her signals; so we had to anchor suddenly and I went off in a small boat with the captain to the *Caroline*. It was cold by this time and my arm was rather stiff and I was tired; I hauled myself up on board the *Caroline* by a rope and found H—— and two men on board. All the rest were trying to get the shore end on shore, but had failed and apparently had stuck on shore, and the waves were getting up. We had anchored in the right place and next morning we hoped the shore end would be laid, so we had only to go back. It was of course still colder and quite night. I went to bed and hoped to sleep, but, alas, the rheumatism got into the joints and caused me terrible pain so that I could not sleep. I bore it as long as I could in order to disturb no one, for all were tired; but at last I could bear it no longer and managed to wake the steward and got a mustard poultice which took the pain from the shoulder; but then the elbow got very bad, and I had to call the second steward and get a second poultice, and then it was daylight, and I felt very ill and feverish. The sea was now rather rough—too rough rather for small boats, but luckily a sort of thing called a scoot came out, and we got on board her with some trouble, and got on shore after a good tossing about which made us all sea-sick. The cable sent from the *Caroline* was just 60 yards too short and did not reach the shore, so although the *Caroline* did make the splice late that night, we could neither test nor speak. Reuter was at Norderney, and I had to do the best I could, which was not much, and went to bed early; I thought I should never sleep again, but in sheer desperation got up in the middle of the night and gulped a lot of raw whisky and slept at last. But not long. A Mr. F—— washed my face and hands and dressed me; and we hauled the cable out of the sea, and got it joined to the telegraph station, and on October 3d telegraphed to Lowestoft first and then to London. Miss Clara Volkman, a niece of Mrs. Reuter's, sent the first message to Mrs. Reuter, who was waiting (Varley used Miss Clara's hand as a kind of key), and I sent one of the first messages to Odden. I thought a message addressed to him would not frighten you, and that he would enjoy a message through Papa's cable. I hope he did. They were all very merry, but I had been so lowered by pain that I could not enjoy myself in spite of the success."

V

Of the 1869 cruise in the *Great Eastern,* I give what I am able; only sorry it is no more, for the sake of the ship itself, already almost a legend even to the generation that saw it launched.

"*June* 17, 1869.—Here are the names of our staff in whom I expect you to be interested, as the future *Great Eastern* stories may be full of them: Theophilus Smith, a man of Latimer Clark's; Leslie C. Hill, my prizeman at University College; Lord Sackville Cecil; King, one of the Thomsonian Kings; Laws, goes for Willoughby Smith, who will also be on board; Varley, Clark, and Sir James Anderson make up the sum of all you know anything of. A Captain Halpin commands the big ship. There are four smaller vessels. The *Wm. Cory,* which laid the Norderney cable, has already gone to St. Pierre to lay the shore ends. The *Hawk* and *Chiltern* have gone to Brest to lay shore ends. The *Hawk* and *Scanderia* go with us across the Atlantic and we shall at St. Pierre be transshipped into one or the other.

"*June* 18. *Somewhere in London.*—The shore end is laid, as you may have seen, and we are all under pressing orders to march, so we start from London to-night at 5.10.

"*June* 20. *Off Ushant.*—I am getting quite fond of the big ship. Yesterday morning in the quiet sunlight, she turned so slowly and lazily in the great harbor at Portland, and by and by slipped out past the long pier with so little stir, that I could hardly believe we were really off. No men drunk, no women crying, no singing or swearing, no confusion or bustle on deck—nobody apparently aware that they had anything to do. The look of the thing was that the ship had been spoken to civilly and had kindly undertaken to do everything that was necessary without any further interference. I have a nice cabin with plenty of room for my legs in my berth and have slept two nights like a top. Then we have the ladies' cabin set apart as an engineer's office, and I think this decidedly the nicest place in the ship: 35 feet x 20 feet broad—four tables, three great mirrors, plenty of air and no heat from the funnels which spoil the great dining-room. I saw a whole library of books on the walls when here last, and this made me less anxious to provide light literature; but alas, to-day I find that they are every one bibles or prayer-books. Now one can not read many hundred bibles. . . . As for the motion of the ship it is not very much, but 'twill suffice. Thomson shook hands and wished me well. I *do* like Thomson. . . . Tell Austin that the *Great Eastern* has six masts and four funnels. When I get back I will make a little model of her for all the chicks and pay out cotton reels. . . . Here we are at 4.20 at Brest. We leave probably to-morrow morning.

"*July* 12. *Great Eastern.*—Here as I write we run our last course for the buoy at the St. Pierre shore end. It blows and lightens, and our good ship rolls, and buoys are hard to find; but we must soon now finish our work, and then this letter will start for home. . . . Yesterday we were mournfully groping our way through the wet gray fog, not at all sure where we were, with one consort lost and the other faintly answering the roar of our great whistle through the mist. As to the ship which was to meet us, and pioneer us up the deep channel, we did not know if we should come within twenty miles of her; when suddenly up went the fog, out came the sun, and there straight ahead, was the *Wm. Cory,* our pioneer, and a little dancing boat, the *Gulnare,* sending signals of welcome with many-colored flags. Since then we have been steaming in a grand procession; but now at 2 A. M., the fog has fallen, and the great roaring whistle calls up the distant answering notes all around us. Shall we, or shall we not find the buoy?

"*July* 13.—All yesterday we lay in the damp, dripping fog, with whistles all round and guns firing so that we might not bump up against one another. This little delay has let us get our reports into tolerable order. We are now at 7 o'clock getting the cable end again, with the main cable buoy close to us."

A telegram of July 20: "I have received your four welcome letters. The Americans are charming people."

VI

And here to make an end are a few random bits about the cruise to Pernambuco:

"*Plymouth, June* 21, 1873.—I have been down to the sea-shore and smelt the salt sea and like it; and I have seen the *Hooper* pointing her great bow seaward, while light smoke rises from her funnels telling that the fires are being lighted; and sorry as I am to be without you, something inside me answers to the call to be off and doing.

"*Lalla Rookh. Plymouth, June* 22.—We have been a little cruise in the yacht over to the Eddystone lighthouse, and my sea-legs seem very well on. Strange how alike all these starts are—first on shore, steaming hot days with a smell of bone-dust and tar and salt-water; then the little puffing, panting steam-launch, that bustles out across a port with green woody sides, little yachts sliding about, men-of-war training-ships, and then a great big black hulk of a thing with a mass of smaller vessels sticking to it like parasites; and that is one's home being coaled. Then comes the champagne lunch where every one says all that is polite to every one else, and then the uncertainty when to start. So far as we know *now,* we are to start to-morrow morning at daybreak; letters that come later are to be sent to Pernambuco by first mail. . . . My father has sent me the heartiest sort of Jack Tar's cheer.

"*S. S. Hooper. Off Funchal, June* 29.—Here we are off Madeira at seven o'clock in the morning. Thomson has been sounding with his special toy ever since half-past three (1087 fathoms of water). I have been watching the day break, and long jagged islands start into being out of the dull night. We are still some miles from land; but the sea is calmer than Loch Eil often was, and the big *Hooper* rests very contentedly after a pleasant voyage and favorable breezes. I have not been able to do any real work except the testing [of the cable], for though not sea-sick, I get a little giddy when I try to think on board. . . . The ducks have just had their daily souse and are quacking and gabbling in a mighty way outside the door of the captain's deck cabin where I write. The cocks are crowing, and new-laid eggs are said to be found in the coops. Four mild oxen have been untethered and allowed to walk along the broad iron decks—a whole drove of sheep seem quite content while licking big lumps of bay salt. Two exceedingly impertinent goats lead the cook a perfect life of misery. They steal round the galley and *will* nibble the carrots or turnips if his back is turned for one minute; and then he throws something at them and misses them; and they scuttle off laughing impudently, and flick one ear at him from a safe distance. This is the most impudent gesture I ever saw. Winking is nothing to it. The ear normally hangs down behind; the goat turns sideways to her enemy—by a little knowing cock of the head flicks one ear over one eye, and squints from behind it for half a minute—tosses her head back, skips a pace or two further off and repeats the maneuver. The cook is very fat and can not run after that goat much.

"*Pernambuco, Aug.* 1.—We landed here yesterday, all well and cable sound, after a good passage. . . . I am on familiar terms with cocoanuts, mangoes, and bread-fruit trees, but I think I like the negresses best of anything I have seen. In turbans and loose sea-green robes, with beautiful black-brown complexions and a stately carriage, they really are a satisfaction to my eye. The weather has been windy and rainy; the *Hooper* has to lie about a mile from the town, in an open roadstead, with the whole swell of the Atlantic driving straight on shore. The little steam launch gives all who go in her a good ducking, as she bobs about on the great rollers; and my old gymnastic practise stands me in good stead on boarding and leaving her. We clamber down a rope ladder hanging from the high stern, and then taking a rope in one hand swing into the launch at the moment when she can contrive to steam up under us— bobbing about like an apple thrown into a tub all the while. The President of the province and his suite tried to come off to a State luncheon on board on Sunday; but the launch being rather heavily laden, behaved worse than usual, and some green seas stove in the President's hat and made him wetter than he had probably ever been in his life; so after one or two rollers, he turned back; and indeed he was wise to do so, for I don't see how he could have got on board. . . . Being fully convinced that the world will not continue to go round unless I pay it personal attention, I must run away to my work."

CHAPTER VI

1869—1885

Edinburgh—Colleagues—*Farrago Vitæ*—I. The Family Circle—Fleeming and his Sons—Highland Life—The Cruise of the Steam Launch—Summer in Styria—Rustic Manners—II. The Drama—Private Theatricals—III. Sanitary Associations—The Phonograph—IV. Fleeming's Acquaintance with a Student—His late Maturity of Mind—Religion and Morality—His Love of Heroism—Taste in Literature—V. His Talk—His late Popularity—Letter from M. Trélat.

THE remaining external incidents of Fleeming's life, pleasures, honors, fresh interests, new friends, are not such as will bear to be told at any length or in the temporal order. And it is now time to lay narration by, and to look at the man he was and the life he lived, more largely.

Edinburgh, which was thenceforth to be his home, is a metropolitan small town; where college professors and the lawyers of the Parliament House give the tone, and persons of leisure, attracted by educational advantages, make up much of the bulk of society. Not, therefore, an unlettered place, yet not pedantic, Edinburgh will compare favorably with much larger cities. A hard and disputatious element has been commented on by strangers: it would not touch Fleeming, who was himself regarded, even in this metropolis of disputation, as a thorny table-mate. To golf unhappily he did not take, and golf is a cardinal virtue in the city of the winds. Nor did he become an archer of the Queen's Body-Guard, which is the Chiltern Hundreds of the distasted golfer. He did not even frequent the Evening Club, where his colleague Tait (in my day) was so punctual and so genial. So that in some ways he stood outside of the lighter and kindlier life of his new home. I should not like to say that he was generally popular; but there as elsewhere, those who knew him well enough to love him, loved him well. And he, upon his side, liked a place where a dinner party was not of necessity unintellectual, and where men stood up to him in argument.

The presence of his old classmate, Tait, was one of his early attractions to the chair; and now that Fleeming is gone again, Tait still remains, ruling and really teaching his great classes. Sir Robert Christison was an old friend of his mother's; Sir Alexander Grant, Kelland, and Sellar, were new acquaintances and highly valued; and these too, all but the last, have been taken from their friends and labors. Death has been busy in the Senatus. I will speak elsewhere of Fleeming's demeanor to his students; and it will be enough to add here that his relations with his colleagues in general were pleasant to himself.

Edinburgh, then, with its society, its university work, its delightful scenery, and its skating in the winter, was thenceforth his base of operations. But he shot meanwhile erratic in many directions: twice to America, as we have seen, on telegraph voyages; continually to London on business; often to Paris; year after year to the Highlands to shoot, to fish, to learn reels and Gaelic, to make the acquaintance and fall in love with the character of Highlanders; and once to Styria, to hunt chamois and dance with peasant maidens. All the while, he was pursuing the course of his electrical studies, making fresh inventions, taking up the phonograph, filled with theories of graphic representation; reading, writing, publishing, founding sanitary associations, interested in technical education, investigating the laws of meter, drawing, acting, directing private theatricals, going a long way to see an actor—a long way to see a picture; in the very bubble of the tideway of contemporary interests. And all the while he was busied about his father and mother, his wife, and in particular his sons; anxiously watching, anxiously guiding these, and plunging with his whole fund of youthfulness into their sports and interests. And all the while he was himself maturing—not in character or body, for these remained young—but in the stocked mind, in the tolerant knowledge of life and man, in pious acceptance of the universe. Here is a farrago for a chapter: here is a world of interests and activities, human, artistic, social, scientific, at each of which he sprang with impetuous pleasure, on each of which he squandered energy, the arrow drawn to the head, the whole intensity of his spirit bent, for the moment, on the momentary purpose. It was this that lent such unusual interest to his society, so that no friend of his can forget that figure of Fleeming coming charged with some new discovery: it is this that makes his character so difficult to represent. Our fathers, upon some difficult theme, would invoke the Muse; I can but appeal to the imagination of the reader. When I dwell upon some one thing, he must bear in mind it was only one of a score; that the unweariable brain was teeming at the very time with other thoughts; that the good heart had left no kind duty forgotten.

I

In Edinburgh, for a considerable time, Fleeming's family, to three generations, was united: Mr. and Mrs. Austin at Hailes, Captain and Mrs. Jenkin in the suburb of Merchiston, Fleeming himself in the city. It is not every family that could risk with safety such close interdomestic dealings; but in this also Fleeming was particularly favored. Even the two extremes, Mr. Austin and the Captain, drew together. It is pleasant to find that each of the old gentlemen set a high value on the good looks of the other, doubtless also on his own; and a fine picture they made as they walked the green terrace at Hailes, conversing by the hour. What they talked of is still a mystery to those who knew them; but Mr. Austin always declared that on these occasions he learned much. To both of these families of elders, due service was paid of attention; to both, Fleeming's easy circumstances had brought joy; and the eyes of all were on the grandchildren. In Fleeming's scheme of duties, those of the family stood first; a man was first of all a child, nor did he cease to be so, but only took on added obligations when he became in turn a father. The care of his parents was always a first thought with him, and their gratification his delight. And the care of his sons, as it was always a grave subject of study with him, and an affair never neglected, so it brought him a thousand satisfactions. "Hard work they are," as he once wrote, "but what fit work!" And again: "Oh, it's a cold house where a dog is the only representative of a child!" Not that dogs were despised; we shall drop across the name of Jack, the harum-scarum Irish terrier, ere we have done; his own dog Plato went up with him daily to his lectures, and still (like other friends) feels the loss and looks visibly for the reappearance of his master; and Martin, the cat, Fleeming has himself immortalized, to the delight of Mr. Swinburne, in the columns of the *Spectator*. Indeed there was nothing in which men take interest, in which he took not some; and yet always most in the strong human bonds, ancient as the race and woven of delights and duties.

He was even an anxious father; perhaps that is the part where optimism is hardest tested. He was eager for his sons; eager for their health, whether of mind or body; eager for their education; in that, I should have thought, too eager. But he kept a pleasant face upon all things, believed in play, loved it himself, shared boyishly in theirs, and knew how to put a face of entertainment upon business and a spirit of education into entertainment. If he was to test the progress of the three boys, this advertisement would appear in their little manuscript paper:—"Notice: The Professor of Engineering in the University of Edinburgh intends at the close of the scholastic year to hold examinations in the following subjects. (1) For boys in the fourth class of the Academy—Geometry and Algebra; (2) For boys at Mr. Henderson's school—Dictation and Recitation; (3) For boys taught exclusively by their mothers—Arithmetic and Reading." Prizes were given; but what prize would be so conciliatory as this boyish little joke? It may read thin here; it would smack racily in the playroom. Whenever his sons "started a new fad" (as one of them writes to me) they "had only to tell him about it, and he was at once interested and keen to help." He would discourage them in nothing unless it was hopelessly too hard for them; only, if there was any principle of science involved, they must understand the principle; and whatever was attempted, that was to be done thoroughly. If it was but play, if it was but a puppet show they were to build, he set them the example of being no sluggard in play. When Frewen, the second son, embarked on the ambitious design to make an engine for a toy steamboat, Fleeming made him begin with a proper drawing—doubtless to the disgust of the young engineer; but once that foundation laid, helped in the work with unflagging gusto, "tinkering away," for hours, and assisted at the final trial "in the big bath" with no less excitement than the boy. "He would take any amount of trouble to help us," writes my correspondent. "We never felt an affair was complete till we had called him to see, and he would come at any time, in the middle of any work." There was indeed one recognized playhour, immediately after the despatch of the day's letters; and the boys were to be seen waiting on the stairs until the mail should be ready and the fun could begin. But at no other time did this busy man suffer his work to interfere with that first duty to his children; and there is a pleasant tale of the inventive Master Frewen, engaged at the time upon a toy crane, bringing to the study where his father sat at work a half-wound reel that formed some part of his design, and observing, "Papa, you might finiss windin' this for me; I am so very busy to-day."

I put together here a few brief extracts from Fleeming's letters, none very important in itself, but all together building up a pleasant picture of the father with his sons.

"Jan. 15th, 1875.—Frewen contemplates suspending soap bubbles by silk threads for experimental purposes. I don't think he will manage that. Bernard" [the youngest] "volunteered to blow the bubbles with enthusiasm."

"Jan. 17th.—I am learning a great deal of electrostatics in consequence of the perpetual cross-examination to which I am subjected. I long for you on many grounds, but one is that I may not be obliged to deliver a running lecture on abstract points of science, subject to cross-examination by two acute students. Bernie does not cross-examine much; but if any one gets discomfited, he laughs a sort of little silver-whistle giggle, which is trying to the unhappy blunderer."

"May 9th.—Frewen is deep in parachutes. I beg him

not to drop from the top landing in one of his own making."

"June 6th, 1876.—Frewen's crank axle is a failure just at present—but he bears up."

"June 14*th.*—The boys enjoy their riding. It gets them whole funds of adventures. One of their caps falling off is matter for delightful reminiscences; and when a horse breaks his step, the occurrence becomes a rear, a shy, or a plunge as they talk it over. Austin, with quiet confidence, speaks of the greater pleasure in riding a spirited horse, even if he does give a little trouble. It is the stolid brute that he dislikes. (N. B. You can still see six inches between him and the saddle when his pony trots.) I listen and sympathize and throw out no hint that their achievements are not really great."

"June 18*th.*—Bernard is much impressed by the fact that I can be useful to Frewen about the steamboat" [which the latter irrepressible inventor was making]. "He says quite with awe, 'He would not have got on nearly so well if you had not helped him.'"

"June 27*th.*—I do not see what I could do without Austin. He talks so pleasantly and is so truly good all through."

"July 7*th.*—My chief difficulty with Austin is to get him measured for a pair of trousers. Hitherto I have failed, but I keep a stout heart and mean to succeed. Frewen the observer, in describing the paces of two horses, says, 'Polly takes twenty-seven steps to get round the school. I couldn't count Sophy, but she takes more than a hundred.'"

"Feb. 18*th,* 1877.—We all feel very lonely without you. Frewen had to come up and sit in my room for company last night and I actually kissed him, a thing that has not occurred for years. Jack, poor fellow, bears it as well as he can, and has taken the opportunity of having a fester on his foot, so he is lame and has it bathed, and this occupies his thoughts a good deal."

"Feb. 19*th.*—As to Mill, Austin has not got the list yet. I think it will prejudice him very much against Mill—but that is not my affair. Education of that kind! . . .

I would as soon cram my boys with food and boast of the pounds they had eaten, as cram them with literature."

But if Fleeming was an anxious father, he did not suffer his anxiety to prevent the boys from any manly or even dangerous pursuit. Whatever it might occur to them to try, he would carefully show them how to do it, explain the risks, and then either share the danger himself or, if that were not possible, stand aside and wait the event with that unhappy courage of the looker-on. He was a good swimmer, and taught them to swim. He thoroughly loved all manly exercises; and during their holidays, and principally in the Highlands, helped and encouraged them to excel in as many as possible: to shoot, to fish, to walk, to pull an oar, to hand, reef and steer, and to run a steam launch. In all of these, and in all parts of Highland life, he shared delightedly. He was well on to forty when he took once more to shooting, he was forty-three when he killed his first salmon, but no boy could have more single-mindedly rejoiced in these pursuits. His growing love for the Highland character, perhaps also a sense of the difficulty of the task, led him to take up at forty-one the study of Gaelic; in which he made some shadow of progress, but not much: the fastnesses of that elusive speech retaining to the last their independence. At the house of his friend Mrs. Blackburn, who plays the part of a Highland lady as to the manner born, he learned the delightful custom of kitchen dances, which became the rule at his own house and brought him into yet nearer contact with his neighbors. And thus at forty-two he began to learn the reel; a study to which he brought his usual smiling earnestness; and the steps, diagrammatically represented by his own hand, are before me as I write.

It was in 1879 that a new feature was added to the Highland life: a steam launch, called the *Purgle,* the Styrian corruption of Walpurga, after a friend to be hereafter mentioned. "The steam launch goes," Fleeming wrote. "I wish you had been present to describe two scenes of which she has been the occasion already: one during which the population of Ullapool, to a baby, was harnessed to her hurrahing—and the other in which the same population sat with its legs over a little pier, watching Frewen and Bernie getting up steam for the first time." The *Purgle* was got with educational intent; and it served its purpose so well, and the boys knew their business so practically, that when the summer was at an end, Fleeming, Mrs. Jenkin, Frewen the engineer, Bernard the stoker, and Kenneth Robertson a Highland seaman, set forth in her to make the passage south. The first morning they got from Lorch Broom into Gruinard Bay, where they lunched upon an island; but the wind blowing up in the afternoon, with sheets of rain, it was found impossible to beat to sea; and very much in the situation of castaways upon an unknown coast, the party landed at the mouth of Gruinard river. A shooting lodge was spied among the trees; there Fleeming went; and though the master, Mr. Murray, was from home, though the two Jenkin boys were of course as black as colliers, and all the castaways so wetted through that, as they stood in the passage, pools formed about their feet and ran before them into the house, yet Mrs. Murray kindly entertained them for the night. On the morrow, however, visitors were to arrive; there would be no room and, in so out-of-the-way a spot, most probably no food for the crew of the *Purgle;* and on the morrow about noon, with the bay white with spindrift and the wind so strong that one could scarcely stand against it, they got up steam and skulked under the land as far as Sanda Bay. Here they crept into a seaside cave, and cooked some food; but the weather now freshening to a gale, it was plain they must moor the launch where she was, and find their way overland to some place of shelter. Even to get their baggage from on board was no light business; for the dingey was blown so far to leeward every trip, that they must carry her back by hand along the beach. But this once managed, and a cart procured in the neighborhood, they were able to spend the night in a pothouse on Ault Bea. Next day, the sea was unapproachable; but the next they had a pleasant passage to Poolewe, hugging the cliffs, the falling swell bursting close by them in the gullies, and the black scarts that sat like ornaments on the top of every stack and pinnacle, looking down into the *Purgle* as she passed. The climate of Scotland had not done with them yet; for three days they lay storm-stayed in Poolewe, and when they put to sea on the morning of the fourth, the sailors prayed them for God's sake not to attempt the passage. Their setting out was indeed merely tentative; but presently they had gone too far to return, and found themselves committed to double Rhu Reay with a foul wind and a cross sea. From half-past eleven in the morning until half-past five at night, they were in immediate and unceasing danger. Upon the least mishap, the *Purgle* must either have been swamped by the seas or bulged upon the cliffs of that rude headland. Fleeming and Robertson took turns baling and steering; Mrs. Jenkin, so violent was the commotion of the boat, held on with both hands; Frewen, by Robertson's direction, ran the engine, slacking and pressing her to meet the seas; and Bernard, only twelve years old, deadly sea-sick, and continually thrown against the boiler, so that he was found next day to be covered with burns, yet kept an even fire. It was a very thankful party that sat down that evening to meat in the hotel at Gairloch. And perhaps, although the thing was new in the family, no one was much surprised when Fleeming said grace over that meal. Thenceforward he continued to observe the form, so that there was kept alive in his house a grateful memory of peril and deliverance. But there was nothing of the muff in Fleeming; he thought it a good thing to escape death, but a becoming and a healthful thing to run the risk of it; and what is rarer, that which he thought for himself, he thought for his family also. In spite of the terrors of Rhu Reay, the cruise was persevered in and brought to an end under happier conditions.

One year, instead of the Highlands, Alt Aussee, in the Steiermark, was chosen for the holidays; and the place, the people, and the life delighted Fleeming. He worked hard at German, which he had much forgotten since he was a boy; and what is highly characteristic, equally hard at the patois, in which he learned to excel. He won a prize at a Schützenfest; and though he hunted chamois without much success, brought down more interesting game in the shape of the Styrian peasants, and in particular of his gillie, Joseph. This Joseph was much of a character; and his appreciations of Fleeming have a fine note of their own. The bringing up of the boys he deigned to approve of: *"fast so gut wie ein Bauer,"* was his trenchant criticism.

The attention and courtly respect with which Fleeming surrounded his wife, was something of a puzzle to the philosophic gillie; he announced in the village that Mrs. Jenkin—*die silberne Frau*, as the folk had prettily named her from some silver ornaments—was a *"geborene Gräfin"* who had married beneath her; and when Fleeming explained what he called the English theory (though indeed it was quite his own) of married relations, Joseph, admiring but unconvinced, avowed it was *"gar schön."* Joseph's cousin, Walpurga Moser, to an orchestra of clarionet and zither, taught the family the country dances, the Steierisch and the Ländler, and gained their hearts during the lessons. Her sister Loys, too, who was up at the Alp with the cattle, came down to church on Sundays, made acquaintance with the Jenkins, and must have them up to see the sunrise from her house upon the Loser, where they had supper and all slept in the loft among the hay. The Mosers were not lost sight of; Walpurga still corresponds with Mrs. Jenkin, and it was a late pleasure of Fleeming's to choose and despatch a wedding present for his little mountain friend. This visit was brought to an end by a ball in the big inn parlor; the refreshments chosen, the list of guests drawn up, by Joseph; the best music of the place in attendance; and hosts and guests in their best clothes. The ball was opened by Mrs. Jenkin dancing Steierisch with a lordly Bauer, in gray and silver and with a plumed hat; and Fleeming followed with Walpurga Moser.

There ran a principle through all these holiday pleasures. In Styria, as in the Highlands, the same course was followed: Fleeming threw himself as fully as he could into the life and occupations of the native people, studying everywhere their dances and their language, and conforming, always with pleasure, to their rustic etiquette. Just as the ball at Alt Aussee was designed for the taste of Joseph, the parting feast at Attadale was ordered in every particular to the taste of Murdoch the Keeper. Fleeming was not one of the common, so-called gentlemen, who take the tricks of their own coterie to be eternal principles of taste. He was aware, on the other hand, that rustic people dwelling in their own places follow ancient rules with fastidious precision, and are easily shocked and embarrassed by what (if they used the word) they would have to call the vulgarity of visitors from town. And he, who was so cavalier with men of his own class, was sedulous to shield the more tender feelings of the peasant; he, who could be so trying in a drawing-room, was even punctilious in the cottage. It was in all respects a happy virtue. It renewed his life, during these holidays, in all particulars. It often entertained him with the discovery of strange survivals; as when, by the orders of Murdoch, Mrs. Jenkin must publicly taste of every dish before it was set before her guests. And thus to throw himself into a fresh life and a new school of manners was a grateful exercise of Fleeming's mimetic instinct; and to the pleasures of the open air, of hardships supported, of dexterities improved and displayed, and of plain and elegant society, added a spice of drama.

II

Fleeming was all his life a lover of the play and all that belonged to it. Dramatic literature he knew fully. He was one of the not very numerous people who can read a play: a knack, the fruit of much knowledge and some imagination, comparable to that of reading score. Few men better understood the artificial principles on which a play is good or bad; few more unaffectedly enjoyed a piece of any merit of construction. His own play was conceived with a double design; for he had long been filled with his theory of the true story of Griselda; used to gird at Father Chaucer for his misconception; and was, perhaps first of all, moved by the desire to do justice to the Marquis of Saluces, and perhaps only in the second place, by the wish to treat a story (as he phrased it) like a sum in arithmetic. I do not think he quite succeeded; but I must own myself no fit judge. Fleeming and I were teacher and taught as to the principles, disputatious rivals in the practise, of dramatic writing.

Acting had always, ever since Rachel and the Marseillaise, a particular power on him. "If I do not cry at the play," he used to say, "I want to have my money back." Even from a poor play with poor actors he could draw pleasure. "Giacometti's *Elisabetta,*" I find him writing, "fetched the house vastly. Poor Queen Elizabeth! And yet it was a little good." And again, after a night of Salvini: "I do not suppose any one with feelings could sit out *Othello,* if Iago and Desdemona were acted." Salvini was, in his view, the greatest actor he had seen. We were all indeed moved and bettered by the visit of that wonderful man.—"I declare I feel as if I could pray!" cried one of us, on the return from *Hamlet.*—"That is prayer," said Fleeming. W. B. Hole and I, in a fine enthusiasm of gratitude, determined to draw up an address to Salvini, did so, and carried it to Fleeming; and I shall never forget with what coldness he heard and deleted the eloquence of our draft, nor with what spirit (our vanities once properly mortified) he threw himself into the business of collecting signatures. It was his part, on the ground of his Italian, to see and arrange with the actor; it was mine to write in the *Academy* a notice of the first performance of *Macbeth.* Fleeming opened the paper, read so far, and flung it on the floor. "No," he cried, "that won't do. You were thinking of yourself, not of Salvini!" The criticism was shrewd as usual, but it was unfair through ignorance; it was not of myself that I was thinking, but of the difficulties of my trade which I had not well mastered. Another unalloyed dramatic pleasure which Fleeming and I shared the year of the Paris Exposition was the *Marquis de Villemer,* that blameless play, performed by Madeleine Brohan, Delaunay, Worms, and Broisat—an actress, in such parts at least, to whom I have never seen full justice rendered. He had his fill of weeping on that occasion: and when the piece was at an end, in front of a café, in the mild, midnight air, we had our fill of talk about the art of acting.

But what gave the stage so strong a hold on Fleeming was an inheritance from Norwich, from Edward Barron, and from Enfield of the *Speaker*. The theater was one of Edward Barron's elegant hobbies; he read plays, as became Enfield's son-in-law, with a good discretion; he wrote plays for his family, in which Eliza Barron used to shine in the chief parts; and later in life, after the Norwich home was broken up, his little granddaughter would sit behind him in a great armchair, and be introduced, with his stately elocution, to the world of dramatic literature. From this, in a direct line, we can deduce the charades at Claygate; and after money came, in the Edinburgh days, that private theater which took up so much of Fleeming's energy and thought. The company—Mr. and Mrs. R. O. Carter of Colwall, W. B. Hole, Captain Charles Douglas, Mr. Kunz, Mr. Benett, Professor Lewis Campbell, Mr. Charles Baxter, and many more—made a charming society for themselves and gave pleasure to their audience. Mr. Carter in Sir Toby Belch it would be hard to beat. Mr. Hole in broad farce, or as the herald in the *Trachiniæ,* showed true stage talent. As for Mrs. Jenkin, it was for her the rest of us existed and were forgiven; her powers were an endless spring of pride and pleasure to her husband; he spent hours hearing and schooling her in private; and when it came to the performance, though there was perhaps no one in the audience more critical, none was more moved than Fleeming. The rest of us did not aspire so high. There were always five performances and weeks of busy rehearsal; and whether we came to sit and stifle as the prompter, to be the dumb (or rather the inarticulate) recipients of Carter's dog whip in the *Taming of the Shrew,* or having earned our spurs, to lose one more illusion in a leading part, we were always sure at least of a long and an exciting holiday in mirthful company.

In this laborious annual diversion, Fleeming's part was large. I never thought him an actor, but he was something of a mimic, which stood him in stead. Thus he had seen Got in Poirier; and his own Poirier, when he came to play it, breathed meritoriously of the model. The last part I saw him play was Triplet, and at first I thought it promised well. But alas! the boys went for a holiday, missed a train, and were not heard of at home till late at night. Poor Fleeming, the man who never hesitated to give his sons a chisel or a gun, or to send them abroad in a canoe or on a horse, toiled all day at his rehearsal, growing hourly paler, Triplet growing hourly less meritorious. And though the return of the children, none the worse for their little adventure, brought the color back into his face, it could not restore him to his part. I remember finding him seated on the stairs in some rare moment of quiet during the subsequent performances. "Hullo, Jenkin," said I, "you look down in the mouth."—"My dear boy," said he, "haven't you heard me? I have not one decent intonation from beginning to end."

But indeed he never supposed himself an actor; took a part, when he took any, merely for convenience, as one takes a hand at whist; and found his true service and pleasure in the more congenial business of the manager. Augier, Racine, Shakespeare, Aristophanes in Hookham Frere's translation, Sophocles and Æschylus in Lewis Campbell's, such were some of the authors whom he introduced to his public. In putting these upon the stage he found a thousand exercises for his ingenuity and taste, a thousand problems arising which he delighted to study, a thousand opportunities to make these infinitesimal improvements which are so much in art and for the artist. Our first Greek play had been costumed by the professional costumer, with unforgetable results of comicality and indecorum: the second, the *Trachiniæ* of Sophocles, he took in hand himself, and a delightful task he made of it. His study was then in antiquarian books, where he found confusion, and on statues and bas-reliefs, where he at last found clearness; after an hour or so at the British Museum he was able to master "the chitôn, sleeves and all"; and before the time was ripe he had a theory of Greek tailoring at his fingers' ends, and had all the costumes made under his eye as a Greek tailor would have made them. "The Greeks made the best plays and the best statues, and were the best architects; of course, they were the best tailors, too," said he; and was never weary, when he could find a tolerant listener, of dwelling on the simplicity, the economy, the elegance, both of means and effect, which made their system so delightful.

But there is another side to the stage-manager's employment. The discipline of acting is detestable; the failures and triumphs of that business appeal too directly to the vanity; and even in the course of a careful amateur performance such as ours, much of the smaller side of man will be displayed. Fleeming, among conflicting vanities and levities, played his part to my admiration. He had his own view; he might be wrong; but the performances (he would remind us) were after all his, and he must decide. He was, in this as in all other things, an iron taskmaster, sparing not himself nor others. If you were going to do it at all he would see that it was done as well as you were able. I have known him to keep two culprits (and one of these his wife) repeating the same action and the same two or three words for a whole weary afternoon. And yet he gained and retained warm feelings from far the most of those who fell under his domination, and particularly (it is pleasant to remember) from the girls. After the slipshod training and the incomplete accomplishments of a girls' school there was something at first annoying, at last exciting and bracing, in this high standard of accomplishment and perseverance.

III

It did not matter why he entered upon any study or employment, whether for amusement like the Greek tailoring or the Highland reels, whether from a desire to serve the public as with his sanitary work, or in the view of benefiting poorer men as with his labors for technical education, he "pitched into it" (as he would have said himself) with the same headlong zest. I give in the Appendix a letter from Colonel Fergusson, which tells fully the nature of the sanitary work and of Fleeming's part and success in it. It will be enough to say here that it was a scheme of protection against the blundering of builders and the dishonesty of plumbers. Started with an eye rather to the houses of the rich, Fleeming hoped his Sanitary Associations would soon extend their sphere of usefulness and improve the dwellings of the poor. In this hope he was disappointed; but in all other ways the scheme exceedingly prospered, associations sprang up and continue to spring up in many quarters, and wherever tried they have been found of use.

Here, then, was a serious employment; it has proved highly useful to mankind; and it was begun besides, in a mood of bitterness, under the shock of what Fleeming would so sensitively feel—the death of a whole family of children. Yet it was gone upon like a holiday jaunt. I read in Colonel Fergusson's letter that his schoolmates bantered him when he began to broach his scheme; so did I at first, and he took the banter as he always did with enjoyment, until he suddenly posed me with the question: "And now do you see any other jokes to make? Well, then," said he, "that's all right. I wanted you to have your fun out first; now we can be serious." And then, with a glowing heat of pleasure, he laid his plans before me, reveling in the details, reveling in hope. It was as he wrote about the joy of electrical experiment: "What shall I compare them to? A new song?—a Greek play?" Delight attended the exercise of all his powers; delight painted the future. Of these ideal visions, some (as I have said) failed of their fruition. And the illusion was characteristic. Fleeming believed we had only to make a virtue cheap and easy, and then all would practise it; that for an end unquestionably good, men would not grudge a little trouble and a little money, though they might stumble at laborious pains and generous sacrifices. He could not believe in any resolute badness. "I can not quite say," he wrote in his young manhood, "that I think there is no sin or misery. This I can say: I do not remember one single malicious act done to myself. In fact, it is rather awkward when I have to say the Lord's Prayer. I have nobody's trespasses to forgive." And to the point, I remember one of our discussions. I said it was a dangerous error not to admit there were bad people; he, that it was only a confession of blindness on our part, and that we probably called others bad only so far as we were wrapped in ourselves and lacking in the transmigratory forces of imagination. I undertook to describe to him three persons irredeemably bad and whom he should admit to be so. In the first case, he denied my evidence: "You can not judge a man upon such testimony," said he. For the second, he owned it made him sick to hear the tale; but then there was no spark of malice, it was mere weakness I had described, and he had never denied nor thought to set a limit to man's weakness. At my third gentleman, he struck his colors. "Yes," said he, "I'm afraid that *is* a bad man." And then looking at me shrewdly: "I wonder if it isn't a very unfortunate thing for you to have met him." I showed him radiantly how it was the world we must know, the world as it was, not a world expurgated and prettified with optimistic rainbows. "Yes, yes," said he; "but this badness is such an easy, lazy explanation. Won't you be tempted to use it, instead of trying to understand people?"

In the year 1878 he took a passionate fancy for the phonograph; it was a toy after his heart, a toy that touched the skirts of life, art, and science, a toy prolific of problems and theories. Something fell to be done for a University Cricket Ground Bazaar. "And the thought struck him," Mr. Ewing writes to me, "to exhibit Edison's phonograph, then the very newest scientific marvel. The instrument itself was not to be purchased—I think no specimen had then crossed the Atlantic—but a copy of the *Times* with an account of it was at hand, and by the help of this we made a phonograph which to our great joy talked, and talked, too, with the purest American accent. It was so good that a second instrument was got ready forthwith. Both were shown at the Bazaar: one by Mrs. Jenkin to people willing to pay half a crown for a private view and the privilege of hearing their own voices, while Jenkin, perfervid as usual, gave half-hourly lectures on the other in an adjoining room—I, as his lieutenant, taking turns. The thing was in its way a little triumph. A few of the visitors were deaf, and hugged the belief that they were the victims of a new kind of fancy-fair swindle. Of the others, many who came to scoff remained to take raffle tickets; and one of the phonographs was finally disposed of in this way, falling, by a happy freak of the ballot-box, into the hands of Sir William Thomson." The other remained in Fleeming's hands, and was a source of infinite occupation. Once it was sent to London, "to bring back on the tinfoil the tones of a lady distinguished for clear vocalizations; at another time Sir Robert Christison was brought in to contribute his powerful bass"; and there scarcely came a visitor about the house but he was made the subject of experiment. The visitors, I am afraid, took their parts lightly: Mr. Hole and I, with unscientific laughter, commemorating various shades of Scotch accent, or proposing to "teach the poor dumb animal to swear." But Fleeming and Mr. Ewing, when we butterflies were gone, were laboriously ardent. Many thoughts that occupied the later years of my friend were caught from the small utterance of that toy. Thence came his inquiries into the roots of articulate language and the foundations of literary art; his papers on vowel sounds, his papers in the *Saturday Review* upon the laws of verse, and many a strange approximation, many a just note, thrown out in talk and now forgotten.

I pass over dozens of his interests, and dwell on this trifling matter of the phonograph, because it seems to me that it depicts the man. So, for Fleeming, one thing joined into another, the greater with the less. He cared not where it was he scratched the surface of the ultimate mystery—in the child's toy, in the great tragedy, in the laws of the tempest, or in the properties of energy or mass—certain that whatever he touched, it was a part of life—and however he touched it there would flow for his happy constitution interest and delight. "All fables have their morals," says Thoreau, "but the innocent enjoy the story." There is a truth represented for the imagination in these lines of a noble poem, where we are told, that in our highest hours of visionary clearness, we can but

> "see the children sport upon the shore
> And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore."

To this clearness Fleeming had attained; and although he heard the voice of the eternal seas and weighed its message, he was yet able, until the end of his life, to sport upon these shores of death and mystery with the gaiety and innocence of children.

IV

It was as a student that I first knew Fleeming, as one of that modest number of young men who sat under his ministrations in a soul-chilling class-room at the top of the University buildings. His presence was against him as a professor: no one, least of all students, would have been moved to respect him at first sight; rather short in stature, markedly plain, boyishly young in manner, cocking his head like a terrier with every mark of the most engaging vivacity and readiness to be pleased, full of words, full of paradox, a stranger could scarcely fail to look at him twice, a man thrown with him in a train could scarcely fail to be engaged by him in talk, but a student would never regard him as academical. Yet he had that fiber in him that order always existed in his class-room. I do not remember that he ever addressed me in language; at the least sign of unrest, his eye would fall on me and I was quelled. Such a feat is comparatively easy in a small class; but I have misbehaved in smaller classes and under eyes more Olympian than Fleeming Jenkin's. He was simply a man from whose reproof one shrank; in manner the least buckrammed of mankind, he had, in serious moments, an extreme dignity of goodness. So it was that he obtained a power over the most insubordinate of students, but a power of which I was myself unconscious. I was inclined to regard any professor as a joke, and Fleeming as a particularly good joke, perhaps the broadest in the vast pleasantry of my curriculum. I was not able to follow his lectures; I somehow dared not misconduct myself, as was my customary solace; and I refrained from attending. This brought me at the end of the session into a relation with my contemned professor that completely opened my eyes. During the year, bad student as I was, he had shown a certain leaning to my society; I had been to his house, he had asked me to take a humble part in his theatricals; I was a master in the art of extracting a certificate even at the cannon's mouth; and I was under no apprehension. But when I approached Fleeming, I found myself in another world; he would have naught of me. "It is quite useless for *you* to come to me, Mr. Stevenson. There may be doubtful cases, there is no doubt about yours. You have simply *not* attended my class." The document was necessary to me for family considerations; and presently I stooped to such pleadings and rose to such adjurations, as made my ears burn to remember. He was quite unmoved; he had no pity for me.—"You are no fool," said he, "and you chose your course." I showed him that he had misconceived his duty, that certificates were things of form, attendance a matter of taste. Two things, he replied, had been required for graduation, a certain competency proved in the final trials and a certain period of genuine training proved by certificate; if he did as I desired, not less than if he gave me hints for an examination, he was aiding me to steal a degree. "You see, Mr. Stevenson, these are the laws and I am here to apply them," said he. I could not say but that this view was tenable, though it was new to me; I changed my attack: it was only for my father's eye that I required his signature, it need never go to the Senatus, I had already certificates enough to justify my year's attendance. "Bring them to me; I can not take your word for that," said he. "Then I will consider." The next day I came charged with my certificates, a humble assortment. And when he had satisfied himself, "Remember," said he, "that I can promise nothing, but I will try to find a form of words." He did find one, and I am still ashamed when I think of his shame in giving me that paper. He made no reproach in speech, but his manner was the more eloquent; it told me plainly what a dirty business we were on; and I went from his presence, with my certificate indeed in my possession, but with no answerable sense of triumph. That was the bitter beginning of my love for Fleeming; I never thought lightly of him afterward.

Once, and once only, after our friendship was truly founded, did we come to a considerable difference. It was, by the rules of poor humanity, my fault and his. I had been led to dabble in society journalism; and this coming to his ears, he felt it like a disgrace upon himself. So far he was exactly in the right; but he was scarce happily inspired when he broached the subject at his own table and before guests who were strangers to me. It was the sort of error he was always ready to repent, but always certain to repeat; and on this occasion he spoke so freely that I soon made an excuse and left the house with the firm purpose of returning no more. About a month later, I met him at dinner at a common friend's. "Now," said he, on the stairs, "I engage you—like a lady to dance—for the end of the evening. You have no right to quarrel with me and not give me a chance." I have often said and thought that Fleeming had no tact; he belied the opinion then. I remember perfectly how, so soon as we could get together, he began his attack: "You may have grounds of quarrel with me; you have none against Mrs. Jenkin; and before I say another word, I want you to promise you will come to *her* house as usual." An interview thus begun could have but one ending; if the quarrel were the fault of both, the merit of the reconciliation was entirely Fleeming's.

When our intimacy first began, coldly enough, accidentally enough on his part, he had still something of the Puritan, something of the inhuman narrowness of the good youth. It fell from him slowly, year by year, as he continued to ripen, and grow milder, and understand more generously the mingled characters of men. In the early days he once read me a bitter lecture; and I remember leaving his house in a fine spring afternoon, with the physical darkness of despair upon my eyesight. Long after he made me a formal retraction of the sermon and a formal apology for the pain he had inflicted; adding drolly, but truly, "You see, at that time I was so much younger than you!"

And yet even in those days there was much to learn from him; and above all his fine spirit of piety, bravely and trustfully accepting life, and his singular delight in the heroic.

His piety was, indeed, a thing of chief importance. His views (as they are called) upon religious matters varied much; and he could never be induced to think them more or less than views. "All dogma is to me mere form," he wrote; "dogmas are mere blind struggles to express the inexpressible. I can not conceive that any single proposition whatever in religion is true in the scientific sense; and yet all the while I think the religious view of the world is the most true view. Try to separate from the mass of their statements that which is common to Socrates, Isaiah, David, St. Bernard, the Jansenists, Luther, Mahomet, Bunyan—yes, and George Eliot: of course you do not believe that this something could be written down in a set of propositions like Euclid, neither will you deny that there is something common and this something very valuable. . . . I shall be sorry if the boys ever give a moment's thought to the question of what community they belong to—I hope they will belong to the great community." I should observe that as time went on his conformity to the church in which he was born grew more complete, and his views drew nearer the conventional. "The longer I live, my dear Louis," he wrote but a few months before his death, "the more convinced I become of a direct care by God—which is reasonably impossible—but there it is." And in his last year he took the communion.

But at the time when I fell under his influence, he stood more aloof; and this made him the more impressive to a youthful atheist. He had a keen sense of language and its imperial influence on men; language contained all the great and sound metaphysics, he was wont to say; and a word once made and generally understood, he thought a real victory of man and reason. But he never dreamed it could be accurate, knowing that words stand symbol for the indefinable. I came to him once with a problem which had puzzled me out of measure: what is a cause? why out of so many innumerable millions of conditions, all necessary, should one be singled out and ticketed "the cause"?

"You do not understand," said he. "A cause is the answer to a question: it designates that condition which I happen to know and you happen not to know." It was thus, with partial exception of the mathematical, that he thought of all means of reasoning: they were in his eyes but means of communication, so to be understood, so to be judged, and only so far to be credited. The mathematical he made, I say, exception of: number and measure he believed in to the extent of their significance, but that significance, he was never weary of reminding you, was slender to the verge of nonentity. Science was true, because it told us almost nothing. With a few abstractions it could deal, and deal correctly; conveying honestly faint truths. Apply its means to any concrete fact of life, and this high dialect of the wise became a childish jargon.

Thus the atheistic youth was met at every turn by a skepticism more complete than his own, so that the very weapons of the fight were changed in his grasp to swords of paper. Certainly the church is not right, he would argue, but certainly not the anti-church either. Men are not such fools as to be wholly in the wrong, nor yet are they so placed as to be ever wholly in the right. Somewhere, in midair between the disputants, like hovering Victory in some design of a Greek battle, the truth hangs undiscerned. And in the meanwhile what matter these uncertainties? Right is very obvious; a great consent of the best of mankind, a loud voice within us (whether of God, or whether by inheritance, and in that case still from God), guide and command us in the path of duty. He saw life very simple; he did not love refinements; he was a friend to much conformity in unessentials. For (he would argue) it is in this life as it stands about us, that we are given our problem; the manners of the day are the colors of our palette; they condition, they constrain us; and a man must be very sure he is in the right, must (in a favorite phrase of his) be "either very wise or very vain," to break with any general consent in ethics. I remember taking his advice upon some point of conduct. "Now," he said, "how do you suppose Christ would have advised you?" and when I had answered that he would not have counseled me anything unkind or cowardly, "No," he said, with one of his shrewd strokes at the weakness of his hearer, "nor anything amusing." Later in life, he made less certain in the field of ethics. "The old story of the knowledge of good and evil is a very true one," I find him writing; only (he goes on) "the effect of the original dose is much worn out, leaving Adam's descendants with the knowledge that there is such a thing—but uncertain where." His growing sense of this ambiguity made him less swift to condemn, but no less stimulating in counsel. "You grant yourself certain freedoms. Very well," he would say, "I want to see you pay for them some other way. You positively can not do this: then there positively must be something else that you can do, and I want to see you find that out and do it." Fleeming would never suffer you to think that you were living, if there were not, somewhere in your life, some touch of heroism, to do or to endure.

This was his rarest quality. Far on in middle age, when men begin to lie down with the bestial goddesses, Comfort and Respectability, the things of his nature still sounded as high a note as a young man's. He loved the harsh voice of duty like a call to battle. He loved courage, enterprise, brave natures, a brave word, an ugly virtue; everything that lifts us above the table where we eat or the bed we sleep upon. This with no touch of the motive-monger or the ascetic. He loved his virtues to be practical, his heroes to be great eaters of beef; he loved the jovial Heracles, loved the astute Odysseus; not the Robespierres and Wesleys. A fine buoyant sense of life and of man's unequal character ran through all his thoughts. He could not tolerate the spirit of the pickthank; being what we are, he wished us to see others with a generous eye of admiration, not with the smallness of the seeker after faults. If there shone anywhere a virtue, no matter how incongruously set, it was upon the virtue we must fix our eyes. I remember having found much entertainment in Voltaire's *Saül,* and telling him what seemed to me the drollest touches. He heard me out, as usual when displeased, and then opened fire on me with red-hot shot. To belittle a noble story was easy; it was not literature, it was not art, it was not morality; there was no sustenance in such a form of jesting, there was (in his favorite phrase) "no nitrogenous food" in such literature. And then he proceeded to show what a fine fellow David was; and what a hard knot he was in about Bathsheba, so that (the initial wrong committed) honor might well hesitate in the choice of conduct; and what owls those people were who marveled because an Eastern tyrant had killed Uriah, instead of marveling that he had not killed the prophet also. "Now if Voltaire had helped me to feel that," said he, "I could have seen some fun in it." He loved the comedy which shows a hero human, and yet leaves him a hero; and the laughter which does not lessen love.

It was this taste for what is fine in humankind, that ruled his choice in books. These should all strike a high note, whether brave or tender, and smack of the open air. The noble and simple presentation of things noble and simple, that was the "nitrogenous food" of which he spoke so much, which he sought so eagerly, enjoyed so royally. He wrote to an author, the first part of whose story he had seen with sympathy, hoping that it might continue in the same vein. "That this may be so," he wrote, "I long with the longing of David for the water of Bethlehem. But no man need die for the water a poet can give, and all can drink it to the end of time, and their thirst be quenched and the pool never dry—and the thirst and the water are both blessed." It was in the Greeks particularly that he found this blessed water; he loved "a fresh air" which he found "about the Greek things even in translations"; he loved their freedom from the mawkish and the rancid. The tale of David in the Bible, the *Odyssey,* Sophocles, Æschylus, Shakespeare, Scott; old Dumas in his chivalrous note; Dickens rather than Thackeray, and the *Tale of Two Cities* out of Dickens: such were some of his preferences. To Ariosto and Boccaccio he was always faithful; *Burnt Njal* was a late favorite; and he found at least a passing entertainment in the *Arcadia* and the *Grand Cyrus.* George Eliot he outgrew, finding her latterly only sawdust in the mouth; but her influence, while it lasted, was great, and must have gone some way to form his mind. He was easily set on edge, however, by didactic writing; and held that books should teach no other lesson but what "real life would teach, were it as vividly presented." Again, it was the thing made that took him, the drama in the book; to the book itself, to any merit of the making, he was long strangely blind. He would prefer the *Agamemnon* in the prose of Mr. Buckley, ay, to Keats. But he was his mother's son, learning to the last. He told me one day that literature was not a trade; that it was no craft; that the professed author was merely an amateur with a door-plate. "Very well," said I, "the first time you get a proof, I will demonstrate that it is as much a trade as bricklaying, and that you do not know it." By the very next post, a proof came. I opened it with fear; for he was indeed, as the reader will see by these volumes, a formidable amateur; always wrote brightly, because he always thought trenchantly; and sometimes wrote brilliantly, as the worst of whistlers may sometimes stumble on a perfect intonation. But it was all for the best in the interests of his education; and I was able, over that proof, to give him a quarter of an hour such as Fleeming loved both to give and to receive. His subsequent training passed out of my hands into those of our common friend, W. E. Henley. "Henley and I," he wrote, "have fairly good times wigging one another for not doing better. I wig him because he won't try to write a real play, and he wigs me because I can't try to write English." When I next saw him, he was full of his new acquisitions. "And yet I have lost something too," he said regretfully. "Up to now Scott seemed to me quite perfect, he was all I wanted. Since I have been learning this confounded thing, I took up one of the novels, and a great deal of it is both careless and clumsy."

V

He spoke four languages with freedom, not even English with any marked propriety. What he uttered was not so much well said, as excellently acted; so we may hear every day the inexpressive language of a poorly-written drama assume character and color in the hands of a good player. No man had more of the *vis comica* in private life; he played no character on the stage, as he could play himself among his friends. It was one of his special charms; now when the voice is silent and the face still it makes it impossible to do justice to his power in conversation. He was a delightful companion to such as can bear bracing weather; not to the very vain; not to the owlishly wise, who can not have their dogmas canvassed; not to the painfully refined, whose sentiments become articles of faith. The spirit in which he could write that he was "much revived by having an opportunity of abusing Whistler to a knot of his special admirers," is a spirit apt to be misconstrued. He was not a dogmatist, even about Whistler. "The house is full of pretty things," he wrote, when on a visit; "but Mrs. ——'s taste in pretty things has one very bad fault: it is not my taste." And that was the true attitude of his mind; but these eternal differences it was his joy to thrash out and wrangle over by the hour. It was no wonder if he loved the Greeks; he was in many ways a Greek himself; he should have been a sophist and met Socrates; he would have loved Socrates, and done battle with him stanchly and manfully owned his defeat; and the dialogue, arranged by Plato, would have shone even in Plato's gallery. He seemed in talk aggressive, petulant, full of a singular energy; as vain you would have said as a peacock, until you trod on his toes, and then you saw that he was at least clear of all the sicklier elements of vanity. Soundly rang his laugh at any jest against himself. He wished to be taken, as he took others, for what was good in him without dissimulation of the evil, for what was wise in him without concealment of the childish. He hated a draped virtue, and despised a wit on its own defense. And he drew (if I may so express myself) a human and humorous portrait of himself with all his defects and qualities, as he thus enjoyed in talk the robust sports of the intelligence; giving and taking manfully, always without pretense, always with paradox, always with exuberant pleasure; speaking wisely of what he knew, foolishly of what he knew not; a teacher, a learner, but still combative; picking holes in what was said even to the length of captiousness, yet aware of all that was said rightly; jubilant in victory, delighted by defeat: a Greek sophist, a British schoolboy.

Among the legends of what was once a very pleasant spot, the old Savile Club, not then divorced from Savile Row, there are many memories of Fleeming. He was not popular at first, being known simply as "the man who dines here and goes up to Scotland"; but he grew at last, I think, the most generally liked of all the members. To those who truly knew and loved him, who had tasted the real sweetness of his nature, Fleeming's porcupine ways had always been a matter of keen regret. They introduced him to their own friends with fear; sometimes recalled the step with mortification. It was not possible to look on with patience while a man so lovable thwarted love at every step. But the course of time and the ripening of his nature brought a cure. It was at the Savile that he first remarked a change; it soon spread beyond the walls of the club. Presently I find him writing: "Will you kindly explain what has happened to me? All my life I have talked a good deal, with the almost unfailing result of making people sick of the sound of my tongue. It appeared to me that I had various things to say, and I had no malevolent feelings, but nevertheless the result was that expressed above. Well, lately some change has happened. If I talk to a person one day, they must have me the next. Faces light up when they see me.—'Ah, I say, come here,'—'come and dine with me.' It's the most preposterous thing I ever experienced. It is curiously pleasant. You have enjoyed it all your life, and therefore can not conceive how bewildering a burst of it is for the first time at forty-nine." And this late sunshine of popularity still further softened him. He was a bit of a porcupine to the last, still shedding darts; or rather he was to the end a bit of a schoolboy, and must still throw stones; but the essential toleration that underlay his disputatiousness, and the kindness that made of him a tender sick-nurse and a generous helper, shone more conspicuously through. A new pleasure had come to him; and as with all sound natures, he was bettered by the pleasure.

I can best show Fleeming in this later stage by quoting from a vivid and interesting letter of M. Emile Trélat's. Here, admirably expressed, is how he appeared to a friend of another nation, whom he encountered only late in life. M. Trélat will pardon me if I correct, even before I quote him; but what the Frenchman supposed to flow from some particular bitterness against France, was only Fleeming's usual address. Had M. Trélat been Italian, Italy would have fared as ill; and yet Italy was Fleeming's favorite country.

> Vous savez comment j'ai connu Fleeming Jenkin! C'était en Mai 1878. Nous étions tous deux membres du jury de l'Exposition Universelle. On n'avait rien fait qui vaille à la première séance de notre classe, qui avait eu lieu le matin. Tout le monde avait parlé et reparlé pour ne rien dire. Cela durait depuis huit heures; il était midi. Je demandai la parole pour une motion d'ordre, et je proposai que la séance fut levée à la condition que chaque membre français *emportât* à déjeuner un juré étranger. Jenkin applaudit. "Je vous emmène déjeuner," lui criai-je, "Je veux bien." . . . Nous partimes; en chemin nous vous rencontrions; il vous présente et nous allons déjeuner tous trois auprès du Trocadéro.
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> Et, depuis ce temps, nous avons été de vieux amis. Non seulement nous passions nos journées au jury où nous étions toujours ensemble côte-à-côte. Mais nos habitudes s'étaient faites telles que, non contents de déjeuner en face l'un de l'autre, je le ramenais dîner presque tous les jours chez moi. Cela dura une quinzaine: puis il fut rappelé en Angleterre. Mais il revint, et nous fîmes encore une bonne étape de vie intellectuelle, morale et philosophique. Je crois qu'il me rendait déjà tout ce que j'éprouvais de sympathie et d'estime, et que je ne fus pas pour rein dans son retour à Paris.
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> Chose singulière! nous nous étions attachés l'un à l'autre par les sous-entendus bien plus que par la matière de nos conversations. A vrai dire, nous étions presque toujours en discussion; et il nous arrivait de nous rire au nez l'un et l'autre pendant des heures, tant nous nous étonnions réciproquement de la diversité de nos points de vue. Je le trouvais si Anglais, et il me trouvait si Français! Il était si franchement révolté de certaines choses qu'il voyait chez nous, et je comprenais si mal certaines choses qui se passaient chez vous! Rien de plus intêressant que ces contacts qui étaient des contrastes, et que ces rencontres d'idées qui étaient des choses; rien de si attachant que les échappées de cœur ou d'esprit auxquelles ces petits conflits donnaient à tout moment cours. C'est dans ces conditions que, pendant son séjour à Paris en 1878, je

conduisis un peu partout mon nouvel ami. Nous allâmes chez Madame Edmond Adam, où il vit passer beaucoup d'hommes politiques avec lesquels il causa. Mais c'est chez les ministres qu'il fut intéressé. Le moment était, d'ailleurs, curieux en France. Je me rappelle que, lorsque je le présentai au Ministre du Commerce, il fit cette spirituelle repartie: "C'est la seconde fois que je viens en France sous la République. La première fois c'était en 1848, elle s'était coiffée de travers: je suis bien heureux de saluer aujourd'hui votre excellence, quand elle a mis son chapeau droit." Une fois je le menai voir couronner la Rosière de Nanterre. Il y suivit les cérémonies civiles et religieuses; il y assista au banquet donné par le Maire; il y vit notre de Lesseps, auquel il porta un toast. Le soir, nous revînmes tard à Paris; il faisait chaud: nous étions un peu fatigués; nous entrâmes dans un des rares cafés encore ouverts. Il devint silencieux.—"N'êtes-vous pas content de votre journée?" lui dis-je.—"O, si! mais je réfléchis, et je me dis que vous êtes un peuple gai—tous ces braves gens étaient gais aujourd'hui. C'est une vertu, la gaieté, et vous l'avez en France, cette vertu!" Il me disait cela mélancoliquement; et c'était le première fois que je lui entendais faire une louange adressée à la France. . . . Mais il ne faut pas que vous voyiez là une plainte de ma part. Je serais un ingrat si je me plagnais; car il me disait souvent: "Quel bon Français vous faites!" Et il m'aimait à cause de cela, quoiqu'il semblât n'aimer pas la France. C'était là un trait de son originalité. Il est vrai qu'il s'en tirait en disant que je ne ressemblai pas à mes compatriotes, ce à quoi il ne connaissait rien!—Tout cela était fort curieux; car, moi-même, je l'aimais quoiqu'il en eût à mon pays!

En 1879 il amena son fils Austin à Paris. J'attirai celui-ci. Il déjeunait avec moi deux fois par semaine. Je lui montrai ce qu'était l'intimité française en le tutoyant paternellement. Cela reserra beaucoup nos liens d'intimité avec Jenkin. . . . Je fis inviter mon ami au congrès de *l'Association française pour l'avancement des sciences,* qui se tenait à Rheims en 1880. Il y vint. J'eus le plaisir de lui donner la parole dans la section du génie civil et militaire, que je présidais. Il y fit une très intéressante communication, qui me montrait une fois de plus l'originalité de ses vues et la sûreté de sa science. C'est à l'issue de ce congrès que je passai lui faire visite à Rochefort, où je le trouvai installé en famille et où je présentai pour la première fois mes hommages à son éminente compagne. Je le vis là sous un jour nouveau et touchant pour moi. Madame Jenkin, qu'il entourait si galamment, et ses deux jeunes fils donnaient encore plus de relief à sa personne. J'emportai des quelques heures que je passai à côte de lui dans ce charmant paysage un souvenir ému.

J'étais allé en Angleterre en 1882 sans pouvoir gagner Edimbourg. J'y retournai en 1883 avec la commission d'assainissement de la ville de Paris, dont je faisais partie. Jenkin me rejoignit. Je le fis entendre par mes collègues; car il était fondateur d'une société de salubrité. Il eut un grand succès parmi nous. Mais ce voyage me restera toujours en mémoire parce que c'est là que se fixa défenitivement notre forte amitié. Il m'invita un jour à dîner à son club et au moment de me faire asseoir à côté de lui, il me retint et me dit: "Je voudrais vous demander de m'accorder quelque chose. C'est mon sentiment que nos relations ne peuvent pas se bien continuer si vous ne me donnez pas la permission de vous tutoyer. Voulez-vous que nous nous tutoyions?" Je lui pris les mains et je lui dis qu'une pareille proposition venant d'un Anglais, et d'un Anglais de sa haute distinction, c'était une victoire, dont je serais fier toute ma vie. Et nous commencions à user de cette nouvelle forme dans nos rapports. Vous savez avec quelle finesse il parlait le français; comme il en connaissait tous les tours, comme il jouait avec ses difficultés, et même avec ses petites gamineries. Je crois qu'il a été heureux de pratiquer avec moi ce tutoiement, qui ne s'adapte pas à l'anglais, et qui est si français. Je ne puis vous peindre l'étendue et la variété de nos conversations de la soirée. Mais ce que je puis vous dire, c'est que, sous la caresse du *tu*, nos idées se sont élevées. Nous avions toujours beaucoup ri ensemble; mais nous n'avions jamais laissé des banalités s'introduire dans nos échanges de pensées. Ce soir-là, notre horizon intellectuel s'est élargie, et nous y avons poussé des reconnaissances profondes et lointaines. Après avoir vivement causé à table, nous avons longuement causé au salon; et nous nous séparions le soir à Trafalgar Square, après avoir longé les trottoirs, stationné aux coins des rues et deux fois rebroussé chemin en nous reconduisant l'un l'autre. Il était près d'une heure du matin! Mais quelle belle passe d'argumentation, quels beaux échanges de sentiments, quelles fortes confidences patriotiques nous avions fournies! J'ai compris ce soir là que Jenkin ne détestait pas la France, et je lui serrai fort les mains en l'embrassant. Nous nous quittions aussi amis qu'on puisse l'être; et notre affection s'était par lui étendue et comprise dans un *tu* français.

CHAPTER VII

1875—1885

Mrs. Jenkin's Illness—Captain Jenkin—The Golden Wedding—Death of Uncle John—Death of Mr. and Mrs. Austin—Illness and Death of the Captain—Death of Mrs. Jenkin—Effect on Fleeming—Telpherage—The End.

AND now I must resume my narrative for that melancholy business that concludes all human histories. In January of the year 1875, while Fleeming's sky was still unclouded, he was reading Smiles. "I read my engineers' lives steadily," he writes, "but find biographies depressing. I suspect one reason to be that misfortunes and trials can be graphically described, but happiness and the causes of happiness either can not be or are not. A grand new branch of literature opens to my view; a drama in which people begin in a poor way and end, after getting gradually happier, in an ecstasy of enjoyment. The common novel is not the thing at all. It gives struggle followed by relief. I want each act to close on a new and triumphant happiness, which has been steadily growing all the while. This is the real antithesis of tragedy, where things get blacker and blacker and end in hopeless woe. Smiles has not grasped my grand idea, and only shows a bitter struggle followed by a little respite before death. Some feeble critic might say my new idea was not true to nature. I'm sick of this old-fashioned notion of art. Hold a mirror up, indeed! Let's paint a picture of how things ought to be and hold that up to nature, and perhaps the poor old woman may repent and mend her ways." The "grand idea" might be possible in art; not even the ingenuity of nature could so round in the actual life of any man. And yet it might almost seem to fancy that she had read the letter and taken the hint; for to Fleeming the cruelties of fate were strangely blended with tenderness, and when death came, it came harshly to others, to him not unkindly.

In the autumn of that same year, 1875, Fleeming's father and mother were walking in the garden of their house at Merchiston, when the latter fell to the ground. It was thought at the time to be a stumble; it was in all likelihood a premonitory stroke of palsy. From that day, there fell upon her an abiding panic fear; that glib, superficial part of us that speaks and reasons could allege no cause, science itself could find no mark of danger, a son's solicitude was laid at rest; but the eyes of the body saw the approach of a blow, and the consciousness of the body trembled at its coming. It came in a moment; the brilliant, spirited old lady leaped from her bed, raving. For about six months this stage of her disease continued with many painful and many pathetic circumstances; her husband who tended her, her son who was unwearied in his visits, looked for no change in her condition but the change that comes to all. "Poor mother," I find Fleeming writing, "I can not get the tones of her voice out of my head. . . . I may have to bear this pain for a long time; and so I am bearing it and sparing myself whatever pain seems useless. Mercifully I do sleep, I am so weary that I must sleep." And again later: "I could do very well, if my mind did not revert to my poor mother's state whenever I stop attending to matters immediately before me." And the next day: "I can never feel a moment's pleasure without having my mother's suffering recalled by the very feeling of happiness. A pretty, young face recalls hers by contrast—a careworn face recalls it by association. I tell you, for I can speak to no one else; but do not suppose that I wilfully let my mind dwell on sorrow."

In the summer of the next year, the frenzy left her; it left her stone deaf and almost entirely aphasic, but with some remains of her old sense and courage. Stoutly she set to work with dictionaries, to recover her lost tongues; and had already made notable progress when a third stroke scattered her acquisitions. Thenceforth, for nearly ten years, stroke followed upon stroke, each still further jumbling the threads of her intelligence, but by degrees, so gradual and with such partiality of loss and of survival, that her precise state was always and to the end a matter of dispute. She still remembered her friends; she still loved to learn news of them upon the slate; she still read and marked the list of the subscription library; she still took an interest in the choice of a play for the theatricals, and could remember and find parallel passages; but alongside of these surviving powers were lapses as remarkable; she misbehaved like a child, and a servant had to sit with her at table. To see her so sitting, speaking with the tones of a deaf mute not always to the purpose, and to remember what she had been, was a moving appeal to all who knew her. Such was the pathos of these two old people in their affliction that even the reserve of cities was melted and the neighbors vied in sympathy and kindness. Where so many were more than usually helpful it is hard to draw distinctions; but I am directed and I delight to mention in particular the good Dr. Joseph Bell, Mr. Thomas, and Mr. Archibald Constable with both their wives, the Rev. Mr. Belcombe (of whose good heart and taste I do not hear for the first time—the news had come to me by way of the Infirmary), and their next-door neighbor, unwearied in service, Miss Hannah Mayne. Nor should I omit to mention that John Ruffini continued to write to Mrs. Jenkin till his own death, and the clever lady known to the world as Vernon Lee until the end: a touching, a becoming attention to what was only the wreck and survival of their brilliant friend.

But he to whom this affliction brought the greatest change was the Captain himself. What was bitter in his lot, he bore with unshaken courage; only once, in these ten years of trial, has Mrs. Fleeming Jenkin seen him weep; for the rest of the time his wife—his commanding officer, now become his trying child—was served not with patience alone, but with a lovely happiness of temper. He had belonged all his life to the ancient, formal, speech-making, compliment-presenting school of courtesy; the dictates of this code partook in his eyes of the nature of a duty; and he must now be courteous for two. Partly from a happy illusion, partly in a tender fraud, he kept his wife before the world as a still active partner. When he paid a call he would have her write "with love" upon a card; or if that (at the moment) was too much, he would go armed with a bouquet and present it in her name. He even wrote letters for her to copy and sign; an innocent substitution, which may have caused surprise to Ruffini or to Vernon Lee, if they ever received in the hand of Mrs. Jenkin, the very obvious reflections of her husband. He had always adored his wife whom he now tended and sought to represent in correspondence; it was now, if not before, her turn to repay the compliment; mind enough was left her to perceive his unwearied kindness; and as her moral qualities seemed to survive quite unimpaired, a childish love and gratitude were his reward. She would interrupt a conversation to cross the room and kiss him. If she grew excited (as she did too often) it was his habit to come behind her chair and pat her shoulder; and then she would turn round, and clasp his hand in hers, and look from him to her visitor with a face of pride and love; and it was at such moments only that the light of humanity revived in her eyes. It was hard for any stranger, it was impossible for any that loved them, to behold these mute scenes, to recall the past, and not to weep. But to the Captain, I think it was all happiness. After these so long years, he had found his wife again; perhaps kinder than ever before; perhaps now on a more equal footing; certainly, to his eyes, still beautiful. And the call made on his intelligence had not been made in vain. The merchants of Aux Cayes, who had seen him tried in some "counter-revolution" in 1845, wrote to the consul of his "able and decided measures," "his cool, steady judgment and discernment" with admiration; and of himself, as "a credit and an ornament to H. M. Naval Service." It is plain he must have sunk in all his powers, during the years when he was only a figure and often a dumb figure, in his wife's drawing-room; but with this new term of service he brightened visibly. He showed tact and even invention in managing his wife, guiding or restraining her by the touch, holding family worship so arranged that she could follow and take part in it. He took (to the world's surprise) to reading—voyages, biographies, Blair's *Sermons,* even (for her letter's sake) a work of Vernon Lee's, which proved, however, more than he was quite prepared for. He shone more, in his remarkable way, in society; and twice he had a little holiday to Glenmorven, where, as may be fancied, he was the delight of the Highlanders. One of his last pleasures was to arrange his dining-room. Many and many a room (in their wandering and thriftless existence) had he seen his wife furnish "with exquisite taste" and perhaps with "considerable luxury"; now it was his turn to be the decorator. On the wall he had an engraving of Lord Rodney's action, showing the *Prothée,* his father's ship, if the reader recollects; on either side of this on brackets, his father's sword and his father's telescope, a gift from Admiral Buckner, who had used it himself during the engagement; higher yet, the head of his grandson's first stag, portraits of his son and his son's wife, and a couple of old Windsor jugs from Mrs. Buckner's. But his simple trophy was not yet complete; a device had to be worked and framed and hung below the engraving; and for this he applied to his daughter-in-law: "I want you to work me something, Annie. An anchor at each side—an anchor—stands for an old sailor, you know—stands for hope, you know—an anchor at each side, and in the middle THANKFUL." It is not easy, on any system of punctuation, to represent the Captain's speech. Yet I hope there may shine out of these facts, even as there shone through his own troubled utterance, some of the charm of that delightful spirit.

In 1881, the time of the golden wedding came round for that sad and pretty household. It fell on a Good Friday, and its celebration can scarcely be recalled without both smiles and tears. The drawing-room was filled with presents and beautiful bouquets; these, to Fleeming and his family, the golden bride and bridegroom displayed with unspeakable pride, she so painfully excited that the guests feared every moment to see her stricken afresh, he guiding and moderating her with his customary tact and understanding, and doing the honors of the day with more than his usual delight. Thence they were brought to the dining-room, where the Captain's idea of a feast awaited them: tea and champagne, fruit and toast and childish little luxuries, set forth pell-mell and pressed at random on the guests. And here he must make a speech for himself and his wife, praising their destiny, their marriage, their son, their daughter-in-law, their grandchildren, their manifold causes of gratitude: surely the most innocent speech, the old, sharp contemner of his innocence now watching him with eyes of admiration. Then it was time for the guests to depart; and they went away, bathed, even to the youngest child, in tears of inseparable sorrow and gladness, and leaving the golden bride and bridegroom to their own society and that of the hired nurse.

It was a great thing for Fleeming to make, even thus late, the acquaintance of his father; but the harrowing pathos of such scenes consumed him. In a life of tense intellectual effort, a certain smoothness of emotional tenor were to be desired; or we burn the candle at both ends. Dr. Bell perceived the evil that was being done; he pressed Mrs. Jenkin to restrain her husband from too frequent visits; but here was one of those clear-cut, indubitable duties for which Fleeming lived, and he could not pardon even the suggestion of neglect.

And now, after death had so long visibly but still innocuously hovered above the family, it began at last to strike and its blows fell thick and heavy. The first to go was uncle John Jenkin, taken at last from his Mexican dwelling and the lost tribes of Israel; and nothing in this remarkable old gentleman's life became him like the leaving of it. His sterling, jovial acquiescence in man's destiny was a delight to Fleeming. "My visit to Stowting has been a very strange but not at all a painful one," he wrote. "In case you ever wish to make a person die as he ought to die in a novel," he said to me, "I must tell you about my old uncle." He was to see a nearer instance before long; for this family of Jenkin, if they were not very aptly fitted to live, had the art of manly dying. Uncle John was but an outsider after all; he had dropped out of hail of his nephew's way of life and station in society, and was more like some shrewd, old, humble friend who should have kept a lodge; yet he led the procession of becoming deaths, and began in the mind of Fleeming that train of tender and grateful thought which was like a preparation for his own. Already I find him writing in the plural of "these impending deaths"; already I find him in quest of consolation. "There is little pain in store for these wayfarers," he wrote, "and we have hope—more than hope, trust."

On May 19, 1884, Mr. Austin was taken. He was seventy-eight years of age, suffered sharply with all his old firmness, and died happy in the knowledge that he had left his wife well cared for. This had always been a bosom concern; for the Barrons were long-lived and he believed that she would long survive him. But their union had been so full and quiet that Mrs. Austin languished under the separation. In their last years, they would sit all evening in their own drawing-room hand in hand: two old people who, for all their fundamental differences, had yet grown together and become all the world in each other's eyes and hearts; and it was felt to be a kind release, when eight months after, on January 14, 1885, Eliza Barron followed Alfred Austin. "I wish I could save you from all pain," wrote Fleeming six days later to his sorrowing wife, "I would if I could—but my way is not God's way; and of this be assured,—God's way is best."

In the end of the same month Captain Jenkin caught cold and was confined to bed. He was so unchanged in spirit that at first there seemed no ground of fear; but his great age began to tell and presently it was plain he had a summons. The charm of his sailor's cheerfulness and ancient courtesy, as he lay dying, is not to be described. There he lay, singing his old sea songs; watching the poultry from the window with a child's delight; scribbling on the slate little messages to his wife, who lay bedridden in another room; glad to have Psalms read aloud to him, if they were of a pious strain—checking with an "I don't think we need read that, my dear," any that were gloomy or bloody. Fleeming's wife coming to the house and asking one of the nurses for news of Mrs. Jenkin, "Madam, I do not know," said the nurse; "for I am really so carried away by the Captain that I can think of nothing else." One of the last messages scribbled to his wife and sent her with a glass of the champagne that had been ordered for himself, ran, in his most finished vein of childish madrigal: "The Captain bows to you, my love, across the table." When the end was near and it was thought best that Fleeming should no longer go home but sleep at Merchiston, he broke his news to the Captain with some trepidation, knowing that it carried sentence of death. "Charming, charming—charming arrangement," was the Captain's only commentary. It was the proper thing for a dying man, of Captain Jenkin's school of manners, to make some expression of his spiritual state; nor did he neglect the observance. With his usual abruptness, "Fleeming," said he, "I suppose you and I feel about all this as two Christian gentlemen should." A last pleasure was secured for him. He had been waiting with painful interest for news of Gordon and Khartoum; and by great good fortune a false report reached him that the city was relieved, and the men of Sussex (his old neighbors) had been the first to enter. He sat up in bed and gave three cheers for the Sussex regiment. The subsequent correction, if it came in time, was prudently withheld from the dying man. An hour before midnight on the fifth of February he passed away; aged eighty-four.

Word of his death was kept from Mrs. Jenkin; and she survived him no more than nine and forty hours. On the day before her death she received a letter from her old friend Miss Bell of Manchester, knew the hand, kissed the envelope, and laid it on her heart; so that she too died upon a pleasure. Half an hour after midnight, on the eighth of February, she fell asleep: it is supposed in her seventy-eighth year.

Thus, in the space of less than ten months, the four seniors of this family were taken away; but taken with such features of opportunity in time or pleasant courage in the sufferer that grief was tempered with a kind of admiration. The effect on Fleeming was profound. His pious optimism increased and became touched with something mystic and filial. "The grave is not good, the approaches to it are terrible," he had written in the beginning of his mother's illness; he thought so no more, when he had laid father and mother side by side at Stowting. He had always loved life; in the brief time that now remained to him he seemed to be half in love with death. "Grief is no duty," he wrote to Miss Bell; "it was all too beautiful for grief," he said to me; but the emotion, call it by what name we please, shook him to his depths; his wife thought he would have broken his heart when he must demolish the Captain's trophy in the dining-room, and he seemed thenceforth scarcely the same man.

These last years were indeed years of an excessive demand upon his vitality; he was not only worn out with sorrow, he was worn out by hope. The singular invention to which he gave the name of telpherage had of late consumed his time, overtaxed his strength, and overheated his imagination. The words in which he first mentioned his discovery to me—"I am simply Alnaschar"—were not only descriptive of his state of mind, they were in a sense prophetic; since whatever fortune may await his idea in the future, it was not his to see it bring forth fruit. Alnaschar he was indeed; beholding about him a world all changed, a world filled with telpherage wires; and seeing not only himself and family but all his friends enriched. It was his pleasure, when the company was floated, to endow those whom he liked with stock; one, at least, never knew that he was a possible rich man until the grave had closed over his stealthy benefactor. And however Fleeming chafed among material and business difficulties, this rainbow vision never faded; and he, like his father and mother, may be said to have died upon a pleasure. But the strain told, and he knew that it was telling. "I am becoming a fossil," he had written five years before, as a kind of plea for a holiday visit to his beloved Italy. "Take care! If I am Mr. Fossil, you will be Mrs. Fossil, and Jack will be Jack Fossil, and all the boys will be little fossils, and then we shall be a collection." There was no fear more chimerical for Fleeming; years brought him no repose; he was as packed with energy, as fiery in hope, as at the first; weariness, to which he began to be no stranger, distressed, it did not quiet him. He feared for himself, not without ground, the fate which had overtaken his mother; others shared the fear. In the changed life now made for his family, the elders dead, the sons going from home upon their education, even their tried domestic (Mrs. Alice Dunns) leaving the house after twenty-two years of service, it was not unnatural that he should return to dreams of Italy. He and his wife were to go (as he told me) on "a real honeymoon tour." He had not been alone with his wife "to speak of," he added, since the birth of his children. But now he was to enjoy the society of her to whom he wrote, in these last days, that she was his "Heaven on earth." Now he was to revisit Italy, and see all the pictures and the buildings and the scenes that he admired so warmly, and lay aside for a time the irritations of his strenuous activity. Nor was this all. A trifling operation was to restore his former lightness of foot; and it was a renovated youth that was to set forth upon this reenacted honeymoon.

The operation was performed; it was of a trifling character, it seemed to go well, no fear was entertained; and his wife was reading aloud to him as he lay in bed, when she perceived him to wander in his mind. It is doubtful if he ever recovered a sure grasp upon the things of life; and he was still unconscious when he passed away, June the twelfth, 1885, in the fifty-third year of his age. He passed; but something in his gallant vitality had impressed itself upon his friends, and still impresses. Not from one or two only, but from many, I hear the same tale of how the imagination refuses to accept our loss and instinctively looks for his reappearing, and how memory retains his voice and image like things of yesterday. Others, the well-beloved too, die and are progressively forgotten; two years have passed since Fleeming was laid to rest beside his father, his mother, and his Uncle John; and the thought and the look of our friend still haunt us.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

I

NOTE ON THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF FLEEMING JENKIN TO ELECTRICAL AND ENGINEERING SCIENCE

BY SIR WILLIAM THOMSON, F.R.S., LL.D., ETC., ETC.

IN THE beginning of the year 1859 my former colleague (the first British University Professor of Engineering), Lewis Gordon, at that time deeply engaged in the then new work of cable making and cable laying, came to Glasgow to see apparatus for testing submarine cables and signaling through them, which I had been preparing for practical use on the first Atlantic cable, and which had actually done service upon it, during the six weeks of its successful working between Valencia and Newfoundland. As soon as he had seen something of what I had in hand, he said to me, "I would like to show this to a young man of remarkable ability, at present engaged in our works at Birkenhead." Fleeming Jenkin was accordingly telegraphed for, and appeared next morning in Glasgow. He remained for a week, spending the whole day in my class-room and laboratory, and thus pleasantly began our lifelong acquaintance. I was much struck, not only with his brightness and ability, but with his resolution to understand everything spoken of, to see if possible thoroughly through every difficult question, and (no *if* about this!) to slur over nothing. I soon found that thoroughness of honesty was as strongly engrained in the scientific as in the moral side of his character.

In the first week of our acquaintance, the electric telegraph and, particularly, submarine cables, and the methods, machines, and instruments for laying, testing, and using them, formed naturally the chief subject of our conversations and discussions; as it was in fact the practical object of Jenkin's visit to me in Glasgow; but not much of the week had passed before I found him remarkably interested in science generally, and full of intelligent eagerness on many particular questions of dynamics and physics. When he returned from Glasgow to Birkenhead a correspondence commenced between us, which was continued without intermission up to the last days of his life. It commenced with a well-sustained fire of letters on each side about the physical qualities of submarine cables, and the practical results attainable in the way of rapid signaling through them. Jenkin used excellently the valuable opportunities for experiment allowed him by Newall, and his partner Lewis Gordon, at their Birkenhead factory. Thus he began definite scientific investigation of the copper resistance of the conductor, and the insulating resistance and specific inductive capacity of its gutta-percha coating, in the factory, in various stages of manufacture; and he was the very first to introduce systematically into practise the grand system of absolute measurement founded in Germany by Gauss and Weber. The immense value of this step, if only in respect to the electric telegraph, is amply appreciated by all who remember or who have read something of the history of submarine telegraphy; but it can scarcely be known generally how much it is due to Jenkin.

Looking to the article "Telegraph (Electric)" in the last volume of the old edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica," which was published about the year 1861, we find on record that Jenkin's measurements in absolute units of the specific resistance of pure gutta-percha, and of the gutta-percha with Chatterton's compound constituting the insulation of the Red Sea cable of 1859, are given as the only results in the way of absolute measurements of the electric resistance of an insulating material which had then been made. These remarks are prefaced in the "Encyclopædia" article by the following statement: "No telegraphic testing ought in future to be accepted in any department of telegraphic business which has not this definite character; although it is only within the last year that convenient instruments for working, in absolute measure, have been introduced at all, and the whole system of absolute measure is still almost unknown to practical electricians."

A particular result of great importance in respect to testing is referred to as follows in the "Encyclopædia" article: "The importance of having results thus stated in absolute measure is illustrated by the circumstance that the writer has been able at once to compare them, in the manner stated in a preceding paragraph, with his own previous deductions from the testings of the Atlantic cable during its manufacture in 1857, and with Weber's measurements of the specific resistance of copper." It has now become universally adopted—first of all in England; twenty-two years later by Germany, the country of its birth; and by France and Italy, and all the other countries of Europe and America—practically the whole scientific world—at the Electrical Congress in Paris in the years 1882 and 1884.

An important paper of thirty quarto pages published in the "Transactions of the Royal Society" for June 19, 1862, under the title "Experimental Researches on the Transmission of Electric Signals through submarine cables, Part I. Laws of Transmission through various lengths of one cable, by Fleeming Jenkin, Esq., communicated by C. Wheatstone, Esq., F.R.S.," contains an account of a large part of Jenkin's experimental work in the Birkenhead factory during the years 1859 and 1860. This paper is called Part I. Part II, alas, never appeared, but something that it would have included we can see from the following ominous statement which I find near the end of Part I: "From this value, the electrostatical capacity per unit of length and the specific inductive capacity of the dielectric, could be determined. These points will, however, be more fully treated of in the second part of this paper." Jenkin had in fact made a determination at Birkenhead of the specific inductive capacity of gutta-percha, or of the gutta-percha and Chatterton's compound constituting the insulation of the cable, on which he experimented. This was the very first true measurement of the specific inductive capacity of a dielectric which had been made after the discovery by Faraday of the existence of the property, and his primitive measurement of it for the three substances, glass, shellac, and sulphur; and at the time when Jenkin made his measurements the existence of specific inductive capacity was either unknown, or ignored, or denied, by almost all the scientific authorities of the day.

The original determination of the microfarad, brought out under the auspices of the British Association Committee on Electrical Standards, is due to experimental work by Jenkin, described in a paper, "Experiments on Capacity," constituting No. IV of the appendix to the Report presented by the Committee to the Dundee Meeting of 1867. No other determination, so far as I know, of this important element of electric measurement has hitherto been made; and it is no small thing to be proud of in respect to Jenkin's fame as a scientific and practical electrician that the microfarad which we now all use is his.

The British Association unit of electrical resistance, on which was founded the first practical approximation to absolute measurement on the system of Gauss and Weber, was largely due to Jenkin's zeal as one of the originators, and persevering energy as a working member, of the first Electrical Standards Committee. The experimental work of first making practical standards, founded on the absolute system, which led to the unit now known as the British Association ohm, was chiefly performed by Clerk Maxwell and Jenkin. The realization of the great practical benefit which has resulted from the experimental and scientific work of the Committee is certainly in a large measure due to Jenkin's zeal and perseverance as secretary, and as editor of the volume of Collected Reports of the work of the Committee, which extended over eight years, from 1861 till 1869. The volume of Reports included Jenkin's Cantor Lectures of January, 1866, "On Submarine Telegraphy," through which the practical applications of the scientific principles for which he had worked so devotedly for eight years became part of general knowledge in the engineering profession.

Jenkin's scientific activity continued without abatement to the end. For the last two years of his life he was much occupied with a new mode of electric locomotion, a very remarkable invention of his own, to which he gave the name of "Telpherage." He persevered with endless ingenuity in carrying out the numerous and difficult mechanical arrangements essential to the project, up to the very last days of his work in life. He had completed almost every detail of the realization of the system which was recently opened for practical working at Glynde, in Sussex, four months after his death.

His book on "Magnetism and Electricity," published as one of Longman's elementary series in 1873, marked a new departure in the exposition of electricity, as the first text-book containing a systematic application of the quantitative methods inaugurated by the British Association Committee on Electrical Standards. In 1883 the seventh edition was published, after there had already appeared two foreign editions, one in Italian and the other in German.

His papers on purely engineering subjects, though not numerous, are interesting and valuable. Amongst these may be mentioned the article "Bridges," written by him for the ninth edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica," and afterward republished as a separate treatise in 1876; and a paper "On the Practical Application of Reciprocal Figures to the Calculation of Strains in Framework," read before the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and published in the "Transactions" of that Society in 1869. But perhaps the most important of all is his paper "On the Application of Graphic Methods to the Determination of the Efficiency of Machinery," read before the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and published in the "Transactions," vol. xxviii (1876-78), for which he was awarded the Keith Gold Medal. This paper was a continuation of the subject treated in "Reulaux's Mechanism," and, recognizing the value of that work, supplied the elements required to constitute from Reulaux's kinematic system a full machine receiving energy and doing work.

II

NOTE ON THE WORK OF FLEEMING JENKIN IN CONNECTION WITH SANITARY REFORM

BY LT. COL. ALEXANDER FERGUSSON

It was, I believe, during the autumn of 1877 that there came to Fleeming Jenkin the first inkling of an idea, not the least in importance of the many that emanated from that fertile brain, which, with singular rapidity, took root, and under his careful fostering expanded into a scheme the fruits of which have been of the utmost value to his fellow-citizens and others.

The phrase which afterward suggested itself, and came into use, "Healthy houses," expresses very happily the drift of this scheme, and the ultimate object that Jenkin had in view.

In the summer of that year there had been much talk, and some newspaper correspondence, on the subject of the unsatisfactory condition of many of the best houses in Edinburgh as regards their sanitary state. One gentleman, for example, drew an appalling picture of a large and expensive house he had bought in the West-end of Edinburgh, fresh from the builder's hands. To ascertain precisely what was wrong, and the steps to be taken to remedy the evils, the effects of which were but too apparent, obviously demanded the expenditure of much time and careful study on the part of the intelligent proprietor himself and the professional experts he had to call in, and, it is needless to add, much money. There came also, from the poorer parts of the town, the cry that in many cases the houses of our working people were built anyhow that the dictates of a narrow economy suggested to the speculative and irresponsible builder. The horrors of what was called the "Sandwich system," amongst other evils, were brought to light. It is sufficient to say, generally, that this particular practise of the builder consists in placing in a block of workmen's houses, to save space and money, the water cisterns of one flat, directly under the sanitary appliances of the other, and so on to the top of a house of several stories. It is easy to conceive the abominations that must ensue when the leakage of the upper floors begins to penetrate to the drinking water below. The picture was a hideous one, apart from the well-known fact that a whole class of diseases is habitually spread by contaminated water.

In October, 1876, a brisk and interesting discussion had been carried on in the columns of the *Times* at intervals during the greater part of that month, in which the same subject, that of the health and sewage of towns, had been dealt with by several writers well informed in such matters. Amongst others, Professor Jenkin himself took part, as did Professor G. F. Armstrong, who now occupies the chair of Civil Engineering in Edinburgh. Many of the truths then advanced had been recently discussed at a meeting of the British Association.

It was while such topics were attracting attention that Fleeming Jenkin's family were shocked by the sad intelligence of the loss that friends of theirs had sustained in the deaths of several of their children from causes that could be traced up to the unsanitary condition of their house. Sympathy took the practical form of an intense desire that something might be done to mitigate the chance of such calamities; and, I am permitted to say, the result of a home-talk on this subject was an earnest appeal to the head of the house to turn his scientific knowledge to account in some way that should make people's homes more healthy, and their children's lives more safe. In answer to the call Jenkin turned his thoughts in this direction. And the scheme which I shall endeavor briefly to sketch out was the result.

The obvious remedy for a faulty house is to call in a skilful expert, architect or engineer, who will doubtless point out by means of reports and plans what is wrong, and suggest a remedy; but, as remarked by Professor Jenkin, "it has not been the practise for leading engineers to advise individuals about their house arrangements, except where large outlay is in contemplation." A point of very considerable importance in such a case as that now supposed.

The problem was to ensure to the great body of the citizens sound professional advice concerning their houses, such as had hitherto been only obtainable at great cost—but "with due regard to economical considerations."

The advantages of cooperation are patent to all. Every one can understand how, if a sufficient number of persons combine, there are few luxuries or advantages that are not within their reach, for a moderate payment. The advice of a first-class engineer regarding a dwelling-house was a palpable advantage; but within the reach of comparatively few. One has heard of a winter in Madeira being prescribed as the cure for a poor Infirmary sufferer.

Like most good plans Jenkin's scheme was simple in the extreme, and consisted in *combination* and a small subscription.

"Just," he says, "as the leading physician of the day may give his services to great numbers of poor patients when these are gathered in a hospital, although he could not practically visit them in their own houses, so the simple fact of a number of clients gathered into a group will enable the leading engineer to give them the benefit of his advice."

But it was his opinion that only "continual supervision could secure the householder from danger due to defects in sanitary appliances." He had in his eye a case precisely similar. The following passage in one of his first lectures, afterward repeated frequently, conveys the essence of Professor Jenkin's theory, as well as a graceful acknowledgment of the source from which this happy idea was derived:

"An analogous case occurred to him," he said, "in the 'Steam Users' Association,' in Lancashire. So many boilers burst in that district for want of inspection that an association was formed for having the boilers under a continual course of inspection. Let a perfect boiler be bought from a first-rate maker, the owner has then an apparatus as perfect as it is now sought to make the sanitary appliances in his house. But in the course of time the boiler must decay. The prudent proprietor, therefore, joins the Steam-boiler Association, which, from time to time, examines his boiler, and by the tests they apply are able to give an absolute guarantee against accident. This idea of an inspection by an association was due," the lecturer continued, "to Sir William Fairbairn, under whom he had the honor of serving his apprenticeship."[1] The steam users were thus absolutely protected from danger; and the same idea it was sought to apply to the sanitary system of a house.

To bring together a sufficient number of persons, to form such a "group" as has been contemplated, was the first step to be taken. No time was lost in taking it. The idea hitherto roughly blocked out was now given a more definite form. The original sketch, as dictated by Jenkin himself, is before me, and I can not do better than transcribe it, seeing it is short and simple. Several important alterations were afterward made by himself in consultation with one or two of his Provisional Council; and as experience suggested:

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[1] See paper read at the Congress of the Social Science Association, Edinburgh, October 8, 1880.

"The objects of this Association are twofold.

"1. By taking advantage of the principle of cooperation, to provide its members at moderate cost with such advice and supervision as shall ensure the proper sanitary condition of their own dwellings.

"2. By making use of specially qualified officers to support the inhabitants and local authorities in enforcing obedience to the provisions of those laws and by-laws which affect the sanitary conditions of the community.

"It is proposed that an Association with these objects be formed; and that all residents within the municipal boundaries of Edinburgh be eligible as members. That each member of the Association shall subscribe *one guinea* annually. That in return for the annual subscription each member shall be entitled to the following advantages:

"1. A report by the Engineer of the Association on the sanitary condition of his dwelling, with specific recommendations as to the improvement of drainage, ventilation, &c., should this be found necessary.

"2. The supervision of any alterations in the sanitary fittings of his dwelling which may be carried out by the advice, or with the approval, of the officers of the Association.

"3. An annual inspection of his premises by the Engineer of the Association, with a report as to their sanitary condition.

"4. The right, in consideration of a payment of five shillings, of calling on the Engineer, and legal adviser[2] of the Association to inspect and report on the existence of any infraction or supposed infraction of any law affecting the sanitary condition of the community.

"It is proposed that the Association should be managed by an unpaid Council, to be selected by ballot from among its members.

"That the following salaried officers be engaged by the Association:

"1. One or more acting engineers, who should give their services exclusively to the Association.

"2. A consulting engineer, who should exercise a general supervision, and advise both on the general principles to be followed, and on difficult cases.

"3. A legal agent, to be engaged on such terms as the Council shall hereafter think fit.

"4. A permanent secretary.

"It is also proposed that the officers of the Association should, with the sanction of the Council, have power to take legal proceedings against persons who shall, in their opinion, be guilty of any infraction of sanitary regulations in force throughout the district; and generally it is intended that the Association shall further and promote all undertakings which, in their opinion, are calculated to improve the sanitary condition of Edinburgh and its immediate neighborhood.

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[2] It was ultimately agreed not to appoint an officer of this kind till occasion should arise for his services; none has been appointed.

"In one aspect this Association will be analogous to the Steam Boiler Users' Association, who cooperate in the employment of skilled inspectors. In a second aspect it will be analogous to the Association for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which assists the community in enforcing obedience to existing laws."

Toward the end of November, 1877, this paper was handed about among those who were thought most likely, from their position and public spirit, to forward such a scheme, so clearly for the good of the community. Nay more, a systematic "canvass" was set on foot; personal application the most direct was made use of. The thing was new, and its advantages not perfectly obvious to all at a glance. Every one who knows with what enthusiastic earnestness Jenkin would take hold of, and insist upon, what he felt to be wholesome and right will understand how he persisted, how he patiently explained, and swept away objections that were raised. One could not choose but listen, and understand, and agree.

On the evening of 2d January, 1878, or, to be more correct, the morning of the 3d, two old schoolfellows of his at the Edinburgh Academy walked home with him from an annual dinner of their "Class." All the way in glowing language he expounded his views of house inspection, and the protection of health, asking for sympathy. It was most readily given, and they parted from him with pleasant words of banter regarding this vision of his of grafting "cleanliness" upon another quality said to be a growth, in some sort, of this northern land of ours.

But they reckoned hardly sufficiently on the fact that when Jenkin took a thing of this kind in hand it must *be;* if it lay within the scope of a clear head and boundless energy.

Having secured a nucleus of well-wishers, the next step was to enlist the sympathies of the general public. It was sought to effect this by a series of public lectures. The first of these (one of two) was given on the 22d January under the auspices of the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution. It was apparent to the shrewd lecturer that in bringing before the people a scheme like this, where there was much that was novel, it was necessary first of all that his audience should be aware of the evils to which they were exposed in their own houses, before unfolding a plan for a remedy. The correspondence already referred to as having been carried on in the summer of the previous year had shown how crude were the ideas of many persons well informed, or considered to be so, on this subject. For example, there are few now-a-days who are not aware that a drain, to be safe, must have at intervals along its course openings to the upper air, or that it must be "ventilated," as the phrase goes. But at the time spoken of there were some who went so far as to question this principle; even to argue against it; calling forth this forcible reply—"Here is a pretty farce. You pour out a poison and send it off on its way to the sea, and forget that on its way there its very essence will take wings and fly back into your house up the very pipes it but recently ran down." A properly "trapped" and ventilated drain was the cure for this.

And the lecturer proceeded to show that in Edinburgh, where for the most part house construction is good and solid, but, as in other towns, the bulk of the houses were built when the arrangements for internal sewerage and water supply were very little understood, many serious errors were made. "But," the lecturer went on to say, "Sanitary Science was now established on a fairly sound basis, and the germ theory, or theory of septic ferments, had explained much which used to be obscure. This theory explained how it was that families might in certain cases live with fair health for many years in the midst of great filth, while the dwellers in large and apparently clean mansions were struck down by fever and diphtheria. The filth which was found compatible with health was always isolated filth, and until the germs of some specific disease were introduced, this dirt was merely injurious, not poisonous. The mansions which were apparently clean and yet fever-visited were found to be those in which arrangements had been made for the removal of offensive matter, which arrangements served also to distribute poison germs from one house to another, from one room to another. These mansions had long suckers extended from one to another through the common sewer. Through these suckers, commonly called 'house drains,' they imbibed every taint which any one house in the system could supply. In fact, arrangements were too often made which simply 'laid on' poison to bedrooms just as gas or water was laid on. He had known an intelligent person declare that no harm could come up a certain pipe which ended in a bedroom, because nothing offensive went down. That person had never realized the fact that his pipe joined another pipe, which again joined a sewer, which again whenever there was an epidemic in the neighborhood, received innumerable poison germs; and that, although nothing more serious than scented soap and water went down, the germs of typhoid fever might any day come up."

Professor Jenkin then proceeded to show how a house might be absolutely cut off from all contamination from these sources of evil. Then by means of large diagrams he showed the several systems of pipes within a house. One system colored *red* showed the pipes that received foul matter. A system marked in *blue* showed pipes used to ventilate this red system. The essential conditions of safety in the internal fittings of a house—it was inculcated—were that no air to be breathed, no water to be drunk, should ever be contaminated by connection with *red* or *blue* systems. Then in *yellow* were shown the pipes which received dirty water, which was not necessarily foul.

Lastly a *white* system, which under no circumstances must ever touch the "red," "blue," or "yellow" systems. Such a diagram recalled the complicated anatomical drawings which illustrate the system of arteries and veins in the human frame. Little wonder, then, that one gentleman remarked, in perplexity, that he had not room in his house for such a mass of pipes; but they were already there, with other pipes besides, all carefully hidden away, as in the human tenement, with the inevitable result—as the preacher of cleanliness and health declared—"out of sight, out of mind."

In plain and forcible language were demonstrated the ills this product of modern life is heir to; and the drastic measures that most of them demand to secure the reputation of a healthy house. Lastly the formation of an Association to carry out the idea (already sketched) cheaply, was briefly introduced.

Next morning, January 23d, was the moment chosen to lay the scheme formally before the public. In all the Edinburgh newspapers, along with lengthy reports of the lecture, appeared, in form of an advertisement, a statement[3] of the scheme and its objects, supported by an imposing array of "Provisional Council." In due course several of the Scots newspapers and others, such as the *Building News*, gave leading articles, all of them directing attention to this new thing, as "an interesting experiment about to be tried in Edinburgh," "what promises to be a very useful sanitary movement, now being organized, and an example set that may be worthy of imitation elsewhere," and so on.

Several of the writers waxed eloquent on the singular ingenuity of the scheme; the cheap professional advice to its adherents, &c.; and the rare advantages to be gained by means of cooperation and the traditional "one pound one."

The Provisional Council was absolutely representative of the community, and included names more than sufficient to inspire confidence. It included the Lord-Lieutenant of the county, Lord Rosebery; the Lord Justice Clerk, Lord Moncrieff; the Lord Advocate; Sir Robert Christison; several of the Judges of the Court of Session; the Presidents of the Colleges of Physicians, and of Surgeons; many of the Professors of the University; the Bishop of Edinburgh, and the Dean; several of the best known of the Clergy of the Church of Scotland, Established, Free, and of other branches; one or two members of Parliament; more than one lady (who should have been perhaps mentioned earlier on this list) well known for large views and public spirit; several well known country gentlemen; one or two distinguished civil engineers and architects; and many gentlemen of repute for intelligence and business qualities.

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[3] Briefly stated, the points submitted in this prospectus were these:

1. That the proposed Association was a Society for the Benefit of its members and the community that can not be used for any purposes of profit.
2. The privileges of members include the annual inspection of their premises, as well as a preliminary report on their condition, with an estimate of the cost of any alterations recommended.
3. The skilled inspection from time to time of drains and all sanitary arrangements.
4. No obligation on the part of members to carry out any of the suggestions made by the engineers of the Association, who merely give skilled advice when such is desired.
5. The officers of the Association to have no interest in any outlay recommended.
6. The Association might be of great service to the poorer members of the community.

Very soon after the second of the promised lectures, the members of the new Society began to be numbered by hundreds. By the 28th of February, 500 subscribers having been enrolled, they were in a position to hold their first regular meeting under the presidency of Sir Robert Christison, when a permanent Council composed of many of those who had from the first shown an interest in the movement—for example, Professor (now Sir Douglas) Maclagan and Lord Dean of Guild (now Sir James) Gowans, Professor Jenkin himself undertaking the duties of Consulting Engineer—were appointed. And Jenkin was singularly fortunate in securing as Secretary the late Captain Charles Douglas, a worker as earnest as himself. It was the theory of the originator that the Council, composed of leading men not necessarily possessed of engineering knowledge, should "give a guarantee to the members that the officials employed should have been carefully selected, and themselves work under supervision. Every householder in this town," he adds, "knows the names of the gentlemen composing our Council."

The new Association was a success alike in town and country. Without going far into statistics it will be evident what scope there was, and is, for such operations when it is stated that last year (1885) 60 per cent of the houses inspected in London and its neighborhood were found to have foul air escaping direct into them, and 81 per cent had their sanitary appliances in an unsatisfactory state. Here in Edinburgh things were little, if any, better; as for the country houses, the descriptions of some were simply appalling. As the new Association continued its operations it became the *rôle* of the Consulting Engineer to note such objections, hypothetical or real, as were raised against the working of his scheme. Some of these were ingenious enough: but all were replied to in order, and satisfactorily resolved.

It was shown, for example, that "you might have a dinner party in your house on the day of your inspection"; that the Association worked in the utmost harmony with the city authorities, and with the tradesmen usually employed in such business; and that the officials were as "confidential" as regards the infirmities of a house as any physician consulted by a patient. The strength of the engineering staff has been varied from time to time as the occasion required; at the moment of writing employment is found in Edinburgh and country districts in various parts of Scotland for five engineers temporarily or permanently engaged.

The position Jenkin claimed for the Engineers was a high one, but not too high: thus he well defined it:

"In respect of Domestic Sanitation the business of the Engineer and that of the medical man overlap; for while it is the duty of the engineer to learn from the doctor what conditions are necessary to secure health, the engineer may, nevertheless, claim in his turn the privilege of assisting in the warfare against disease by using his professional skill to determine what mechanical and constructive arrangements are best adapted to secure these conditions."[4]

Flattery in the form of imitation followed in due course. A branch was established at St. Andrews, and one of the earliest of similar institutions was founded at Newport in the United States. Another sprang up at Wolverhampton. In 1881 two such societies were announced as having been set on foot in London. And the *Times* of April 14th, in a leading article of some length, drew attention to the special features of the plan which it was stated had followed close upon a paper read by Professor Fleeming Jenkin before the Society of Arts in the preceding month of January. The adherents included such names as those of Sir William Gull, Professor Huxley, Professor Burdon Sanderson, and Sir Joseph Fayrer. The *Saturday Review*, in January, had already in a characteristic article enforced the principles of the scheme, and shown how, for a small annual payment, "the helpless and hopeless condition of the householder at the mercy of the plumber" might be forever changed.

The London Association, established on the lines of the parent society, has been followed by many others year by year; amongst these are Bradford, Cheltenham, Glasgow, and Liverpool in 1882; Bedford, Brighton, and Newcastle in 1883; Bath, Cambridge, Cardiff, Dublin, and Dundee in 1884; and Swansea in 1885; and while we write the first steps are being taken, with help from Edinburgh, to establish an association at Montreal; sixteen Associations.

Almost, it may be said, a bibliography has been achieved for Fleeming Jenkin's movement.

In 1878 was published *Healthy Houses* (Edin., David Douglas), being the substance of the two lectures already mentioned as having been delivered in Edinburgh with the intention of laying open the idea of the scheme then in contemplation, with a third addressed to the Medico-Chirurgical Society. This book has been long out of print, and such has been the demand for it that the American edition[5] is understood to be also out of print, and unobtainable.

In 1880 was printed (London, Spottiswoode & Co.) a pamphlet entitled *What is the Best Mode of Amending the Present Laws with Reference to Existing Buildings, and also of Improving their Sanitary Condition with due Regard to Economical Considerations?*—the substance of a paper read by Professor Jenkin at the Congress of the Social Science Association at Edinburgh in October of that year.

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[4] *Healthy Houses*, by Professor Fleeming Jenkin, p. 54.

[5] It is perhaps worth mentioning as a curiosity of literature that the American publishers who produced this book in the States, without consulting the author, afterward sent him a handsome check, of course unsolicited by him.

The first item of *Health Lectures for the People* (Edin., 1881), consists of a discourse on the "Care of the Body" delivered by Professor Jenkin in the Watt Institution at Edinburgh, in which the theories of house sanitation are dwelt on.

House Inspection, reprinted from the *Sanitary Record,* was issued in pamphlet form in 1882. And another small tract, *Houses of the Poor; their Sanitary Arrangement,* in 1885.

In this connection it may be said that while the idea formulated by Jenkin has been carried out with a measure of success that could hardly have been foreseen, in one point only, it may be noted, has expectation been somewhat disappointed as regards the good that these Associations should have effected—and the fact was constantly deplored by the founder—namely, the comparative failure as a means of improving the condition of the dwellings of the poorer classes. It was "hoped that charity and public spirit would have used the Association to obtain reports on poor tenements, and to remedy the most glaring evils."[6]

The good that these associations have effected is not to be estimated by the members of their scholarship. They have educated the public on certain points. The fact that they exist has become generally known, and, by consequence, persons of all classes are induced to satisfy themselves of the reasons for the existence of such institutions, and thus they learn of the evils that have called them into being.

Builders, burgh engineers, and private individuals in any way connected with the construction of dwellings in town or country have been put on their mettle, and constrained to keep themselves abreast with the wholesome truths which the engineering staff of all these Sanitary Associations are the means of disseminating.

In this way, doubtless, some good may indirectly have been done to the poorer tenements, though not exactly in the manner contemplated by the founder.

Now, if it be true that Providence helps those who help themselves, surely a debt of gratitude is due to him who has placed (as has been attempted to be shown in this brief narrative) the means of self-help and the attainment of a palpable benefit within the reach of all through the working of a simple plan, whose motto well may be, "Healthy Houses"; and device a strangled snake. A. F.

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[6] It is true, handsome tenements for working people have been built, such as the picturesque group of houses erected with this object by a member of the Council of the Edinburgh Sanitary Association, at Bell's Mills, so well seen from the Dean Bridge, where every appliance that science can suggest has been made use of. But for the ordinary houses of the poor the advice of the Association's engineers has been but rarely taken advantage of.